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AS WOODWARD AND BERNSTEIN WOULD TELL IT

The Washington Monthly

SEPTEMBER 1976/$1.50

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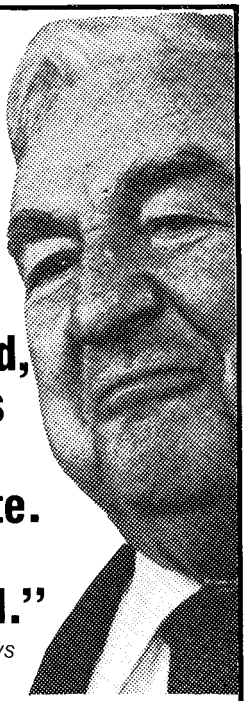

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VOLUME EIGHT NUMBER SEVEN
SEPTEMBER 1976

Prisoners of Liberation
by Tom Bethell
We've gotten into a lot of trouble by blindly following an idea whose time has passed. 2

THE WASHINGTON SANDBAG AVOIDANCE AND MINE DETECTOR KIT

The Seductions of Washington Society
by James Fallows
You can't change Washington if you're part of it. 18

A Kind Word for the Spoils System
by Charles Peters
Most people think civil service is good and politics is bad. They're wrong. 26

Why the Sun Will Never Set on the Federal Empire
by Nicholas Lemann
The Federal Energy Administration was set up as a temporary agency. It's a permanent one now, and the way it got there shows how hard it will be to trim the federal bureaucracy. 32

The Foreign Policy Club: They've Been Wrong Before and They'll Be Wrong Again
by Roger Morris
The people who brought us all the foreign policy mistakes of the '60s have been turning up on Jimmy Carter's advisory staff, as unrepentant as ever. They're ready to take over the State Department again, but they shouldn't be allowed to. 42

The Final Days of the Third Reich As Told To Woodward and Bernstein
by Arthur Levine
In *The Final Days*, Woodward and Bernstein seem to have accepted as gospel the self-serving stories of their principal sources, Fred Buzhardt and Alexander Haig. This led us to speculate on what would have happened if they had relied on similar inside sources for a history of Nazi Germany. 48

Maybe We Should Help Pan Am
by George Hopkins
Liberals are right in condemning the conservative hypocrisy that heaps largess on Lockheed while ignoring the welfare mother, but the story of Pan Am and its enterprising flight crews shows that liberals may be equally wrong in scorning the corporation as they rush to embrace the needy mother. 53

TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES 30

POLITICAL BOOKNOTES 62

MEMO OF THE MONTH 17

POLITICAL PUZZLE 25

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Prisoners of Liberation

David Suter

by Tom Bethell

In times when the focal point of accepted truth shifts slightly to one side, an ideological parallax develops, allowing us to see that truth with detachment for the first time. We may now be living in just such a time, for a number of writers have begun to take note of our conventional wisdom, expressing it as a set of ideas. A recent example in Washington has been Michael Novak, who, as writer-in-residence at *The Washington Star*, wrote a number of columns exploring this theme. In one, "Why Archie Bunker Always Loses Out—And Shouldn't," Novak set out a dozen propositions, or "imperatives," summarizing the outlook of what he called the "middlebrow." The first proposition—the first commandment,

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as it were—was "the human race is progressing." This has no doubt been the fundamental axiom of enlightened thought over the past hundred years or more, propping up many of the other ideas intellectuals live by. And it is noteworthy that this fundamental belief in progress has been strongly undermined in recent years—a key element in the shifting focus of wisdom mentioned above. (The loss of faith in progress appears to have been caused above all by the new fear of technology; the latest machine, we have discovered, does not automatically confer a greater blessing.)

Another writer who seems to be increasingly interested in these matters is Tom Wolfe. It could be said that all along Wolfe has been interested in fashion, but in recent years he has turned away from the manifestations of fashion in popular culture and towards the manifestations of fashion in "high" culture (the quotation marks are advisable because Wolfe leaves us in no doubt that he vastly prefers popular culture—American—to high culture, which is based on European models). In the process he has shed some unexpected light on the ideas intellectuals live by. Perhaps his most remarkable (and unremarked) suggestion has been that the whole idea of repression, which has been so influential in our time, is nothing more than a metaphor drawn from the Victorian steam engine. Freud's Boiler Room Axiom, he calls it. But again, modern technology now threatens to refute the ideas that seem to have been spawned by its predecessors. Contemporary physiologists, examining the organism, do not find boilers but "something more like an electronic circuit, such as a computer." According to this model, Wolfe suggests, indulging in "orgasmic regularity" does not so much let off steam as "turn on the YES gates"; the more you get, the more you want, in other words. Thus the new technology supplies the model for an idea that, if it ever became fashionable, would finish off Freud quicker than a cadre dispatched from the ranks of Women's Liberation.

The Age of Simon Bolivar

And there's another idea, Liberation, that now seems to be just sitting idly around, waiting to be picked up and examined. Liberation! How much it does promise. If one starts to consider these ideas of our time, or the recent past, such as progress and repression, one very soon begins to bump into *liberation*, one of our most dominant and topical notions. Unlike progress and repression, which seem to have been inspired by technology, liberation surely began life as a purely political idea. As we now perceive it, the idea goes something like this:

In former, pre-democratic times, an aristocratic elite was the only group to enjoy the full rights of citizenship. Most of the population was made up of serfs and other second- or third-class citizens, who had little or no say in the control of their destiny, no vote, only rudimentary "rights"; some, in certain societies, were outright enslaved. These people, then, were not liberated. But thanks to the passage of reform legislation, the development of a gradually more progressive attitude, as expressed in such changes as universal, or at least widespread, enfranchisement, and the appearance on the political and national scenery of wise leaders who championed these causes—the liberators—a greater degree of justice began to prevail. It was only in the 19th century that the terms "liberation," and the verb "to liberate" took on political connotations. Before that time the words had referred either to the side effects of experiments in chemistry or to the release of the soul from the body. It was the age of Simon Bolivar, Garibaldi, *The Liberator* newspaper (founded in 1831 and dedicated to the abolition of slavery), and above all, of course, Abraham Lincoln that gave to the concept of liberation its current underlying meaning, although that meaning has, as I hope to show,

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subsequently been degraded. In any event, it is worth noting that the Founding Fathers of liberation, if we may call them that, quite justifiably imbued the term with meritorious meaning. Liberation, whatever else it may have been, was *a good thing*. It was difficult to be against it. The large monuments erected to the memory of its secular patron saints attested to that.

So the original, and one might say literal, meaning of liberation was simply this: that when a man, or a class of men, stood in shackles, and someone came and knocked those shackles off, then an act of liberation had taken place. After that, however, the concept of liberation began to be metaphorically applied in a variety of different fields: in the arts, notably music and painting; and very generally in life, as in the adoption of a liberated "lifestyle," in which a rationale is constructed for the abandonment of conventional codes of behavior or morals; and finally once again in politics, in which the concept of liberation, by now debased, is used as a justification for the erosion of civil liberties under new regimes that have thrown off the yoke of colonial "oppression."

The Spirit in the Attic

It was in the realm of the arts that the then-pristine banner of liberation (fresh from its triumphs over slavery) first began to be waved regularly, and in the field of music especially. The term normally deployed was "freedom" rather than "liberation," but the idea was exactly the same. The theory was that in olden times music had found expression by means of a language that was very traditional, conservative, unchanging (not at all liberated, you see), and above all respectful of some ancient and dimly perceived authority; this was to be *this* way, that must be *that* way, and nothing was to be changed. According to this view of music history (and it is the standard one), Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and other deferential inhabitants of court society were only too glad to operate under these rules, wouldn't dream of breaking them, with their polite, well-mannered 18th-century minds, for whom form, perhaps, was rated a shade higher than substance, and who were, in any event, in the employ of the nobility, came and went by the servants' entrance, and composed pieces on schedule according to request by their masters, for church occasions, and so on.

Still and all, they didn't do too badly, it is conceded. Without ever really plumbing the depths of the human spirit, or soaring to majestic heights, they turned out some pretty music that has deservedly survived to this day. Then came . . . the Titanic Spirit . . . the liberator of music: Beethoven. A book was actually written about him called *Beethoven: The Man Who Freed Music*. He freed it from bondage, that was the general idea. Not only did Beethoven in his personal life emancipate himself from the nobility, going round Vienna being rude to everyone and establishing himself as the prototype of the Lonely-Artist-in-Garret, he also emancipated music itself from its past. He broke the rules, in other words; did what Haydn had dared not do, and of course in the process caused the critics (Oh, those foolish reactionary critics! Theirs was a pitfall ever afterwards to be avoided!) to shake their heads uncomprehendingly, to lose interest in Beethoven eventually (wasn't he slightly off his head?), and to turn instead to the comfortable banalities of Rossini and other Viennese trendies.

Well, how wrong can you get! Beethoven has since, of course, become established as the genius *par excellence* in the history of Western music, while most of his Viennese contemporaries have been forgotten. It pays to break the rules, in other words. The defiant spirit in the attic was worth a hundred pedagogues rapping their pupils over the knuckles in an attempt to curb the human spirit, merely because of a few worthless

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rules. In light of this kind of press, then, it is not surprising that the ethos of rule-breaking became so firmly established in the canons of critical approval.

After Beethoven—*le deluge*. Romanticism took hold, the music became mistier and gauzier and more "individualistic," eventually becoming so individualistic that the audience for it was reduced to a few individuals. The rules of music's language were broken, in other words, and when they were broken there was soon no language left, but a Babel of dialects, each individual composer succeeding only in becoming more incommunicado than the last as he broke one more rule. In the European "classical" tradition, this process of destruction was completely unchecked and went into its terminal phase: total anarchy, as represented by concerts in which computerized sound effects were called music and pianos were smashed with axes. John Cage wrote the final note by composing a piece of music consisting of silence.

Thus music was liberated from its traditions. Looking back over this dismal history, what seems so remarkable is that scarcely one reactionary critical voice was heard. Each new step was inevitably heralded as an "innovation" by the fraternity of critics, and when one of their number, Henry Pleasants, denounced the whole thing as a fraud, he in turn was denounced as a know-nothing, so that a wall of conformity and unanimity was maintained. Still, in view of the painful evidence from one's ears, it is surprising that such a degree of unanimity was maintained, and it is worth looking to see how this came about.

One does not have to look far. Once again, the Axiom of Progress played a key role. Once it had been established that all change is progress, that "innovation" is a uniformly beneficial thing, then it followed that all the changes taking place in music in the 19th century were good and would somehow result in music ending up in a kind of promised land. This notion was further encouraged by the near deification of composers (and artists generally) in our society. If they are not themselves gods, the gods whisper in their ears. They are inspired; they do not make mistakes. In addition, there has been much use in the critical literature of a false overlay of technology and mathematics. This has applied in both music and painting. An artist has often been said to have been faced with a certain technical "problem," which he proceeds to "solve," and then of course passes on to a harder (logically more advanced) problem, much as a mathematician does. Related words such as "logical" and "valid" became important weapons in the critical arsenal. As a result, totally arbitrary musical developments, such as the introduction of serialism or the twelve-tone row, somehow took on an air of inevitability when they were called logical.

In short, when the critic was faced with a new piece of music, he was, in a sense, faced with two alternatives. He could criticize it, attack it, and run the risk in the future of seeming to have been opposed to progress—unprogressive; or, on the other hand, of having been merely the over-eager handmaiden of progress. If the composer's innovation didn't, somehow, in the years ahead seem to come to anything, then at least it would have been better to have given him marks for trying, rather than to have blighted his creative spirit by saying nay. Not surprisingly, nearly all critics in the past 100 years or so have decided that if they are going to err at all, it is going to be on the side of being too progressive.

Egging on Innovation

And therein lies one of the grave dangers of the ethic of liberation. It is not the creative human spirit that is in danger of being blighted by a conservative critical climate. Humans will always experiment and "create" and try something new. If a new idea, or thought, or theme, can't stand a little

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criticism when it is exposed to the light of day, it probably isn't worth much anyway. It is much better that "innovations" be subjected to this critical obstacle course, in any field. On the other hand, a much more dangerous situation threatens to develop when the winds of critical opinion blow constantly in the direction of change and novelty and innovation—in the same direction, that is, as the vast majority of people who like to think of themselves as creative. In that climate, all standards can disappear almost overnight. This clearly happened in the case of the European musical tradition.

Painting was "liberated," too, although we may pass over this briefly. It is worth noting in a cautionary way, however, that the development that is so often said to have "liberated" painting, to wit, photography, was clearly the villain. The argument has always run that painting was made up of two elements—content (the subject matter, the object that was to be represented on the canvas), and the abstractions (form, design, and so on). With the arrival of photography the painter was thought to have been liberated, because he no longer had to concern himself with such mundane matters as the depiction of the world (getting the sitter's likeness down for posterity), since this could now be handled by photography; thus the painter was free to concentrate on the abstractions—*pure* line, *pure* form, *pure* composition. Such purities were thought to be the proper concern of the artist (who tends to be considered a noble being in our culture). The results of the application of this theory about painting have been deplorable, of course, a subject fit for ridicule, as Tom Wolfe has well shown. Painting was liberated to death, and, as with music, with the active encouragement of the critics.

When we turn to literature, we immediately find a different state of affairs: the same course was not followed. The liberation impulse was there, of course, and the same avant-garde of creative souls eagerly lined up waiting to breach the citadels of tradition, but they never made any real inroads; here a *Ulysses* there a *Waste Land*, over yonder a mightily incomprehensible piece of writing, possibly inspired, possibly not. There would be no shortage of applause for these endeavors, but somehow it never made any difference. The citadel was not breached. *The language was not destroyed.* Something else was operating here, operating to guard literature where painting and music had been defenseless, and it is worth looking to see what it was, because it is of relevance to the further consideration of "liberation" as applied to society at large.

A Tattered Banner

It turns out to be very simple. In literature, the vehicle of communication (in this country) is the English language, and the English language must of necessity survive in our society because it is used for purely non-artistic purposes—communication, business dealings, and so on. It fulfills a functional requirement, in other words.

The same is not true of music and painting, alas. We can have symphonies, or we can not have them; it is delightful when we do, but life is not insupportable without them. And the same is true of portraits and still lifes; we can get along without them—can and do. But the same is not true of English. We cannot get along without that, at least not without an almost inconceivable reorganization of life; and so that which English also incidentally transmits, namely poems and novels and belles lettres, is also accidentally preserved. Literature, then, has the good fortune to be rooted and grounded in reality in a way that music and painting are not. They are, in this sense, parasitical arts. If aesthetic liberationists wish to weaken them fatally in the name of progressive thinking, there is very little countervailing force at work in society, and very lit-

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tle to stop the process from acquiring a momentum of its own and proceeding on to the total destruction of the arts in question. The vast majority of the people won't object, particularly in a society such as ours in which a newer and vastly more popular (American) musical tradition has started up. The aesthete, if he wishes, can listen to his Beethoven records.

The lesson provided by the arts seems to be that liberation movements are apt to end up as purely destructive when they do not encounter an abrasive contact with reality. Presumably, then, such liberation movements would by now be regarded with the gravest suspicion, the European traditions of music and painting having been done in under the banner of "More freedom, fewer restrictions." A tattered banner, one would think.

A New 'Lifestyle'

But not a bit of it. Liberation movements have continued apace. Particularly since the early 1960s, and particularly in America, the general principle of liberation has been applied much more generally to society at large, the argument being that the restrictions, inhibitions, and restraints that confined us in the past were rather arbitrarily imposed on us in unenlightened and authoritarian times, and the sign of enlightenment is to liberate oneself from these antiquated notions by adopting a new "lifestyle." Notice, once again, the underlying assumption of progress. (Today, we are wiser.) The old codes, it is argued, were imposed by people of authoritarian mentality, analogous to the pedantic music teacher, whose only aim seems to have been to curb human happiness. Codes and moral imperatives themselves must go, then, and we must, as Michael Novak put it so well, "bravely grope towards new values."

The new liberationism has, of course, most conspicuously surfaced in the realm of sexual conduct, and secondarily in the repudiation of the notion that there is any redeeming merit to censorship. Hugh Hefner, one could say, has been the most visible symbol of both of these movements. Both ideas, however, are by now far less certainly believed in than they were seven or eight years ago, again indicating a shift in the focus of wisdom. (Here and there it is, for instance, conceded, although reluctantly, that a free press may survive even if ten-year-olds *aren't* exposed to the offerings of the Marquis de Sade. As Pamela Hansford Johnson has observed, at least some of the "ritual screaming" in favor of such "openness" has died down.) But this did not happen before one other liberation movement got under way, perhaps the most famous of them all, women's liberation. What I want to argue here is that women's liberation was in fact a reaction against the sexual liberation movement, although the strange thing is that hardly anyone in the women's movement seems to have realized the fact. But the women's liberation movement seems to have occurred, nevertheless, as a result of the "abrasive contact with reality" mentioned above in connection with the literary avant-garde.

When one considers the movements toward sexual and personal liberation, one immediately notices a big difference between them and the way the concept of liberation originated politically. In the newer incarnations of liberation (the Hefnerian variety), no particular grievance is asserted. No group, it is claimed, is being mistreated. No rights, as normally understood, are being denied. There is merely the appeal for the abandonment of certain standards of conduct on the grounds that they were established thoughtlessly, by the authoritarian minds of a former age, and in a generalized way we are encouraged to adopt a new state of mind—a "liberated" state of mind.

There is, of course, a close analogy with the way our contemporary critics have urged freedom upon the arts. Just as the composer is exhorted to

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break the rules, so that he can express his own and nobody else's individuality, so we are urged in sex to "do our own thing," to do, in fact, anything provided it feels nice; and in life, in our "lifestyle," we are urged to *be* anything, anything at all, as long as we are uniquely ourselves. In the language of Esalen: "You gotta be you 'cause you're you and you gotta be, and besides, if you aren't gonna be you who else's gonna be you . . . . This is the Aquarian Age and the time to be oneself, to love one's beauty, to go with one's process." It is noteworthy, also, that just as the contemporary critic of the arts who wants to seem enlightened is above all else permissive, so our current poseurs, those psychologists and psychoanalysts who have arrogated to themselves expertise about the human condition, know that if they are to *seem* enlightened they must always, whatever else they say, reassure us that, yes, it's okay, and you're okay, and go ahead and do it and don't feel bad about it and above all don't be repressed or deny the full expression of your own true self.

But how can they be so sure that the old standards were set up thoughtlessly? One would think that some of these people might at least consider the possibility that ancient societies themselves had, at various points, experimented with different "lifestyles" and had concluded, after much pain and suffering, that monogamy, the avoidance of promiscuity, and so on, did in fact produce the most harmonious results. But that is precisely an unliberated thought, of course. The sign of an unprogressive mind. So we have been given a confident go-ahead, where perhaps there should have been less confidence.

A 'Communication Problem'

Take the case of masturbation, for example. Apparently the Victorians sought to dissuade the practice by claiming that it led to blindness or insanity or worse. Today we have swung to an opposite extreme. How foolish those people were, we say, how unenlightened, how enslaved their minds. Go forth and masturbate if you so desire, relieve your tension, open your safety valve, it won't do you any harm. But again, how can we be so sure? Perhaps Norman Mailer (who has, almost alone, as far as I know, held out on this subject) was right after all, not to mention the Bible. And in fact we do not have to approach the subject in a mystical way in order to see that masturbation plainly does have a harmful social effect on the individual. In most cases it will tend to isolate him socially from his fellow beings. He is liable to develop a "communication problem," in the cant phrase, or to become "alienated," because he can make do, after a fashion, by himself. It is interesting to reflect, also, that the artist or composer who abandons the constraints and restrictions traditionally associated with his art form in the quest for greater "individuality" also becomes, in the end, isolated, alienated, incommunicado.

Similarly, just as experience has shown that an eagerly avant-garde critical fraternity eventually succeeded in doing far more damage than reactionary critics (whose effect, in fact, was probably beneficial), so we might consider the possibility that the advocates of permissiveness in sexual and personal conduct will do more harm than a society that imposes codes of morality and conduct. The normal fallout attributed to such codes of conduct is *guilt*—that guilt which we love to dwell on as an object lesson of what is to be avoided. It provides a marvelous justification for our own excesses. The great problem with assessing the net result of sexual liberation as put into practice is that the effects are likely to be so gossamer fine as to be hard to detect, and they may not appear for some time, which is precisely why its advocates have their nerve to be so self-confident in telling us what they don't really know about. The damage is likely to have

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been done by the time the effects show up.

In fact, it looks as though a recent liberation movement came along precisely as a response to such damaging effects—the women's liberation movement. For decades, of course, the male approach to sexuality that is characterized by the word "macho" had held sway, but it had held sway, as it were, only in the locker rooms and so its effects were not all-pervasive. Then macho-sex was given an enormous boost in currency and circulation by *Playboy*, its imitators, and, oddly, *Cosmopolitan*; and then came further technological developments that did more to make a reality of the sexual freedom movement than all the installments of *Playboy* philosophy: the Pill, and the perfected techniques of abortion. Their combined effect was so great that in the end they did quite unexpectedly give birth to something: the women's liberation movement.

The question is sometimes asked: Why did the women's movement come when it did? And the usual answer, the answer normally provided by the movement itself, is that it came when it did because it was modelled after the civil rights movement. Seeing blacks win their rights had the effect of making women decide the time had come to reach for theirs, too. There is no doubt some truth to this—women participating in the radical movements of the late '60s, such as SDS, often found themselves shut out by macho male radicals, and so they decided to gang together and form a macho female movement in retaliation. This is, however, also a self-serving interpretation. The legitimacy of the civil rights movement is, by extension, conferred upon the women's movement, although in reality the relationship between men and women is quite unlike the relationship between blacks and whites.

There were other factors, such as the gradual "liberation" of the housewife through the advent of an increasing variety of labor-saving devices in the home, but it seems likely that the really important impetus was provided by the new technology of contraception and abortion, and its legalization, which had the effect of liberating couples from the "burden" of children, from families, finally from social responsibility. They were liberated at last—free simply to enjoy one another; free to engage in the "pursuit of happiness," which they were supposed to find in one another's bodies; free, at last, to treat one another as "sex objects." And what do we find? The number one complaint of the women's movement, it turns out, has been that women tend to be treated as "sex objects" by men. And what does a woman become when she takes the Pill? Unable to procreate, she is in grave danger of being treated as an object of sex.

Getting Screwed

What happened here, surely, is that the *theory* that by taking the Pill parity would finally be introduced into the sexual relations of men and women did not work out in practice. In practice, men and women started to treat one another as sex objects, and this turned out to be rather unsettling—an outcome unforeseen, and in fact denied, by the prospectuses of *Playboy* and *Playgirl*.

What was unforeseen, or perhaps one should say what was wilfully ignored by the advocates of sexual liberation, was that when a man and a woman approach sex with a view simply to "screwing," then someone does in fact tend to get screwed. It is surely significant that the word should be retained as a colloquialism for taking advantage of someone.

One is tempted also to say that women get screwed more often than men, although a slightly different way of looking at it would be to say that the "screwing" approach to sex tends to be the male approach, and Pill-sterilized women who found themselves forced to adopt the same approach soon also found that they

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didn't like it. As a result many women began to suspect, not without reason, that they had been subjected to some misleading advertising (in the name of enlightenment and progressive thinking), and they formed their own movement in self-protection—a movement that in its more extreme forms took the form of ganging up on men, and assuming just that machismo guise that it was warring against.

Implicit in this analysis, of course, is the assumption that the male and female psyches are not identical, and the women's liberation movement has subsequently devoted an enormous amount of energy to figuring out how to eradicate this difference. And that is why the women's movement ultimately looks so self-defeating: because its main desire, surely, is to liberate women from their womanliness.

The approved method of doing this is to "raise consciousness," raise girls the same as boys, throw out the dolls, get out of the house, avoid "shit-work," get involved in work the way men do, and so on. But this program draws attention to another weakness of the movement, a potentially fatal one: it is based very precariously on this fundamental Article of Faith: that the differences between men and women have been induced by society, and are not innate. A strong case can be made for the argument that this difference is innate, however, and if this is true then no amount of consciousness raising (a phrase that often tends to be a euphemism for brainwashing) is going to make any difference. It will result merely in frustration, and therefore in the tendency of the women's movement to go even more into opposition against men.

In any event, the notion that women's liberation was principally triggered by the Pill seems eccentric to those who merely saw in the Pill a harmless, and indeed a liberating device. The Pill has been seen by many, including until recently most movement theoreticians, as a welcome liberator, and in general it is worth noting that liberation has been so powerful a slogan in our time that the women's movement as a whole has not dreamed of denouncing the concept of sexual liberation, because that would seem so terribly unprogressive.

One has to be progressive and liberated in this day and age, and so the women's movement in its more extreme manifestations proceeded even further out on the risky limb of liberation; masturbation became a matter of doctrinal importance, lesbianism was encouraged, women were liberated from men, the balance of society was knocked further askew, and the banner of liberation was kept flying.

'Colonial Oppression'

By this time, then, we have become quite accustomed to the notion that liberation has been used as a meritorious label to pin onto unseemly outcomes, and this is the way the label has been used most recently in the political sphere, to return finally to that. It is, admittedly, a sign of the increasing dilapidation of the liberation label that when we hear it used today, in connection with international politics, we are half inclined to suspect that the movement in question has totalitarian ambitions, and is most likely using the term liberation as a euphemism for terrorism; and in this we are quite likely to be right.

It should not have escaped our notice that since World War II movements of political liberation have either failed to liberate a people living under a totalitarian regime, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, or, more commonly, have justified the reduction of the civil liberties of citizens by claiming that they were being liberated in the process.

The great moral imperative behind the "wars of liberation" has been that nations have an inalienable right to liberation from the state of colonial dependency on some other country. It is the fundamental axiom of the recent movements of political liberation, and these days people of liberal

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views are not allowed to question it. Nevertheless, although one may assent to the idea, it clearly needs watching all the same; inasmuch as it is *people* who are normally thought to have rights, not countries, and if in a new nation the idea of liberation is used to excuse the reduction of individual liberties, there is clearly something wrong.

The inalienable right to independence, as Daniel P. Moynihan has said, is "triangulated" with two related concepts: that colonial nations have been subjected to economic exploitation, and the belief that they have also been subjected to "ethnic discrimination corresponding to class distinctions in industrial society," both beliefs often justified, as Moynihan concedes.

In any event, once it becomes axiomatic that nations have the right to cast aside the yoke of political dependence, and once it becomes firmly established in the lexicon of political discourse that the adjective "colonial" is always to qualify one of two nouns, either "oppression" or "exploitation," then it very soon becomes a corollary that the course of action pursued by the "liberators" who take the reins of power into their hands becomes morally justified, even if they oppress the citizenry more than the colonial administrators did.

In fact, of course, it is a purely contingent matter whether home rule is more or less "oppressive" than colonial rule—a matter for scientific investigation if needs be. And unfortunately, such an investigation of a number of recently "liberated" countries, especially in Africa, would show that, as things worked out in practice, liberation meant a reduction in civil liberties for rank and file citizens. George Orwell would have appreciated the point. When this is pointed out to the type of liberal fellow traveler only too common in this country who is very selective in his capacity for outrage about totalitarianism (if the word 'junta' is associated with it, he will be outraged; if the word 'liberation' is associated, it will be fine, even though the condition of the citizenry may be identical), the stock response is that it is unfortunate, but that in the interest of stability the new regime must, for a while, curtail civil liberties, and so on. In Russia they have been waiting since 1917 for this period to end.

Where Is Our Lincoln?

There is a much simpler truth, and it is that "liberation" often constitutes a marvelous justification for the seizure of power, and its legitimization, and subsequently the suppression of civil liberties becomes the simplest way of maintaining power once attained. Liberation, it therefore turns out, is a slogan that often tends to benefit the liberators—the new rulers, the new government, the new oppressors—more than it does the liberated—the citizenry.

Liberation, then, is a slogan that should be watched carefully. Under its auspices, things tend to work out not quite as planned. Does the music critic call for a liberation of the symphony? His appeal has had a way of resulting in greater prestige accruing to the critic than to the future state of the symphony. Sexual liberation, did you say? Marvelous, says Hugh Hefner, looking wise as he sucks on his pipe. Liberation from colonial oppression? That suits Idi Amin just fine (but it's not so nice for those in the dungeons).

Women's liberation liberates women from men, just as personal liberation liberates people from society. Man lives increasingly alone, in touch with his "head," which no doubt is in a strange place, his hand in touch with his body, his television droning on, his companion a pet, and a pet plant, and a pet rock, and he knows that he is alienated, in our Age of Aquarius, under the sign of Libra. Is it not time that he, too, was liberated? Things might improve. Where is our modern-day Lincoln, our William Lloyd Garrison? Who, pray, will free us from an idea whose time has passed? ■

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One of a series of reports on the first hundred years of the telephone.

Why the cost of telephone service has gone up less than the cost of almost anything else.

In the late 1920's, in a Chicago factory, the history of industrial relations reached a turning point. The plant, the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, made telephones and telephone equipment for the Bell System. And in 1927 its managers had a puzzle.

The Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company, scene of what one economist called "the most exciting and important study of factory workers ever made."

For more than two years the company had been studying plant lighting and its relation to efficiency. (It was the era of the "efficiency expert" and "scientific management.") Increases in illumination were followed by increases in production, as expected. But decreases in light levels were also followed by increases in production. Two young women even maintained good production under light no brighter than moonlight.

It became clear that light had only a minor effect, and that there were many other variables to be identified. To solve the puzzle, the company undertook a further study, carried on jointly with the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. The researchers selected a group of six competent, experienced women, explained what they were trying to do, and requested their cooperation. Over a period of twenty-six months, the researchers added rest periods and snacks to the group's work schedule, shortened the work day, and then returned to the original schedule. The group showed an almost unbroken rise in average hourly production and also in total weekly production, even when the week was five hours shorter than at the start. At the end, their production was 30 percent above the beginning level.

The Hawthorne Experiments made it clear that the "scientific management" theory of the day relied too heavily on methods borrowed from the physical sciences. Two major conclusions are widely accepted now, but then their application to factory work was new:

People work better when they feel they are part of a team.

People work better when they feel what they are doing is important.

Today most businesses are aware of "group dynamics" and "job enrichment." But the lessons of Hawthorne have shaped

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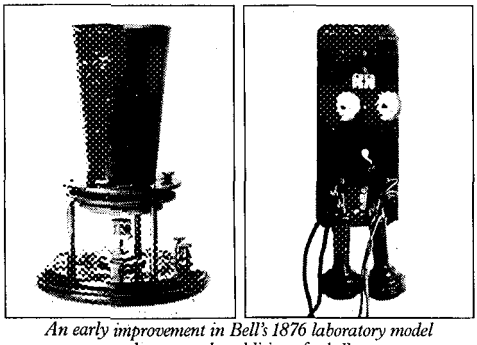
policy for many years, not just in Western Electric factories but in all parts of the Bell System. And the Bell System is still a leader in the exploration of factors affecting industrial productivity.

The prices of most telephone equipment made by Western Electric currently average 20 percent below the prices of other suppliers. Why?

New products for the Bell System are usually designed at Bell Laboratories, the research and development arm of the System. Bell Labs also sets quality standards. But at an early stage manufacturing engineers from Western Electric sit down with the designers and look for ways to save. All companies know that's the best time to cut costs; in the Bell System, that knowledge guides practice. The search for reduced costs continues after production begins. Every aspect of manufacturing is under constant reexamination. Western Electric's engineering cost reductions alone totaled $198 million in first-year savings in 1975.



An early improvement in Bell's 1876 laboratory model phone was the addition of a bell.

Yet none of these achievements would take place unless the people involved were convinced that it is important to produce good telephones at low cost. Phillip S. Babb of McKinsey and Co., management consultants, made this analysis in an interview published in the journal *International Management:*

> Western Electric has succeeded in making cost-cutting a central part of the ethos, the value system, by which their people live. Driving costs down—with retained high quality—is what they spend their working lives at. It is what they take their pride in. It is their way to the corporate top.

To put it another way, the business of the Bell System is providing good telephone service at reasonable cost; Western Electric's activities are directed toward that service goal, rather than toward simply making products.

That service goal characterizes all parts of the Bell System, including the twenty-three regional operating companies and the Long Lines Department. All the parts work closely together to achieve that goal, and all benefit as a result. The operating companies provide telephone service and report, through AT&T, to Bell Labs and Western Electric their needs and the needs of telephone users. Bell Labs and Western Electric design and manufacture equipment to meet known needs as well as the best estimates of expected needs. And the local companies are assured of having the products customers want. To use the vocabulary of the economist, vertical integration with organizational feedback enhances productivity throughout the Bell System.

Touche, Ross & Co., acting as consultants for the staff of the Federal Communications Commission, made a study of how this corporate structure affects costs for telephone service. According to their report, written in 1974:

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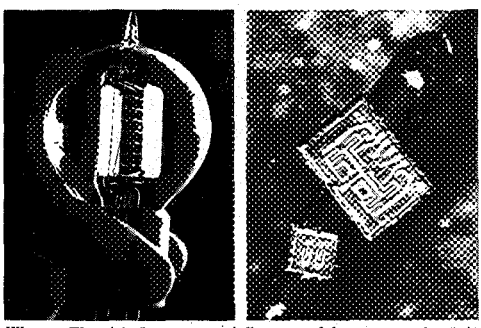
Western Electric's efficient performance has resulted in lower costs than otherwise would have been incurred. Because of Western's pricing policies and practices, these lower costs have not increased profits, but have been passed on to operating companies in the form of lower



Western Electric's first commercially successful vacuum tube (left) was used in 1915 in the amplifiers that made possible the first transcontinental telephone call. Solid-state electronics, begun at Bell Labs, makes it possible for tiny integrated circuits (right) to do the work of many vacuum tubes.

prices....The effect of the interrelationship between Bell and Western Electric is to operate Western, not as a manufacturing concern, but as an integral part of a vertically integrated communications firm. These interrelationships result in a favorable impact upon Western's costs, prices and service to operating companies.

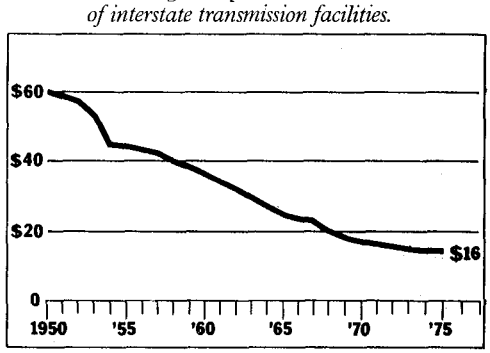
Another major factor affecting productivity is investment in new technology—in research and development. Bell Laboratories is recognized worldwide as one of the leading development and research institutions anywhere. The achievements of Bell Labs people have won two Nobel prizes, one for the demonstration of the wave nature of matter, and the other for the invention of the transistor.

The search for new and better technology has always been a part of the telephone industry. On March 10, 1876, Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson achieved that famous first telephone message, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you." At once they began to improve the instrument, and make it more usable. The goal, then as now, was to provide good telephone service at a price almost every American could afford.

The effect of research and engineering on costs can be seen most readily by considering how it has changed methods of transmitting calls. Bell Labs scientists found ways to send many conversations simultaneously through a pair of wires, and later through coaxial cables. They incorporated microwave radio into transmission systems for long distance calls.

In just the last quarter century, such improvements have reduced the average cost per circuit mile of the Bell System nationwide long distance network from $60 to $16. (See graph.) The cost of the newest coaxial cable system is less than $2 per circuit mile.

Average cost per circuit mile of interstate transmission facilities.



But Bell engineers are not satisfied. Already they are preparing the technology for even greater economies and capacities when call volumes reach a level to justify using it. The new Comstar domestic satellite—being used jointly by the Bell System and GTE Satellite Corporation—in addition to standard communications traffic will

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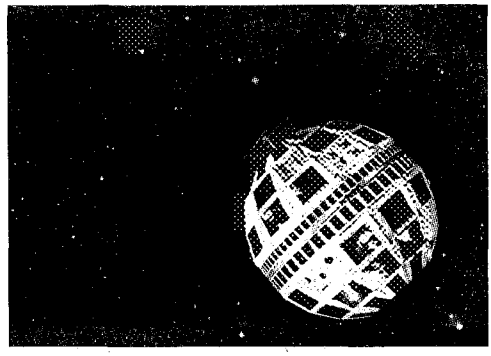
beam experimental signals to an extraordinarily precise antenna so that Bell Laboratories scientists can investigate super-high frequencies that could provide increased satellite capacity in the future. And new systems, using millimeter waveguides or laser light and glass fibers, are expected to reduce transmission costs and add new capacity also.

Another simple way to measure how technology improves productivity is to look at the number of Bell System people required to serve each 10,000 telephones. In 1925 it took 246. In 1958 it took 148. Today it takes 65.

Finally, the Bell System seeks to improve productivity by improving the methods used to manage the telephone business. For instance, the teamwork of Western Electric and Bell Labs people was cited earlier. To facilitate their interaction, some Bell Labs people work adjacent to Western Electric plants. A significant reduction has resulted in the time required to get a new design from drawing board to actual production.

The Bell System is placing greater emphasis on computerized information retrieval for the mountain of data connected with serving 118.5 million telephones. It is moving toward a standardized format for recording and storing data, to make more efficient use of computers.

The Bell System is placing greater emphasis on new methods of employee training, on the restructuring of jobs, and on



The Bell Systems's Telstar® satellite demonstrated the feasibility of using space satellites for communications.

efforts to build more responsibility, challenge and satisfaction into jobs at all levels. Experience to date indicates that these changes help people do a better job, reduce employee turnover, and consequently improve productivity as well.

That is exactly the result one would expect, on the basis of the 1927 Hawthorne findings. The Bell System has changed a lot since 1927. But it still emphasizes people, research, manufacturing efficiency and an organizational structure that fosters teamwork.

Data issued by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics show that overall the productivity of the telephone industry has increased 50% since 1965. That is two-and-a-half times the productivity increase of the United States economy as a whole.

In that same decade, the cost of living rose 75%. Telephone rates for local service went up only 40%. And interstate long distance rates went up about 4%. Now 95% of all American homes have telephones.

One Bell System. It works.

Bell System

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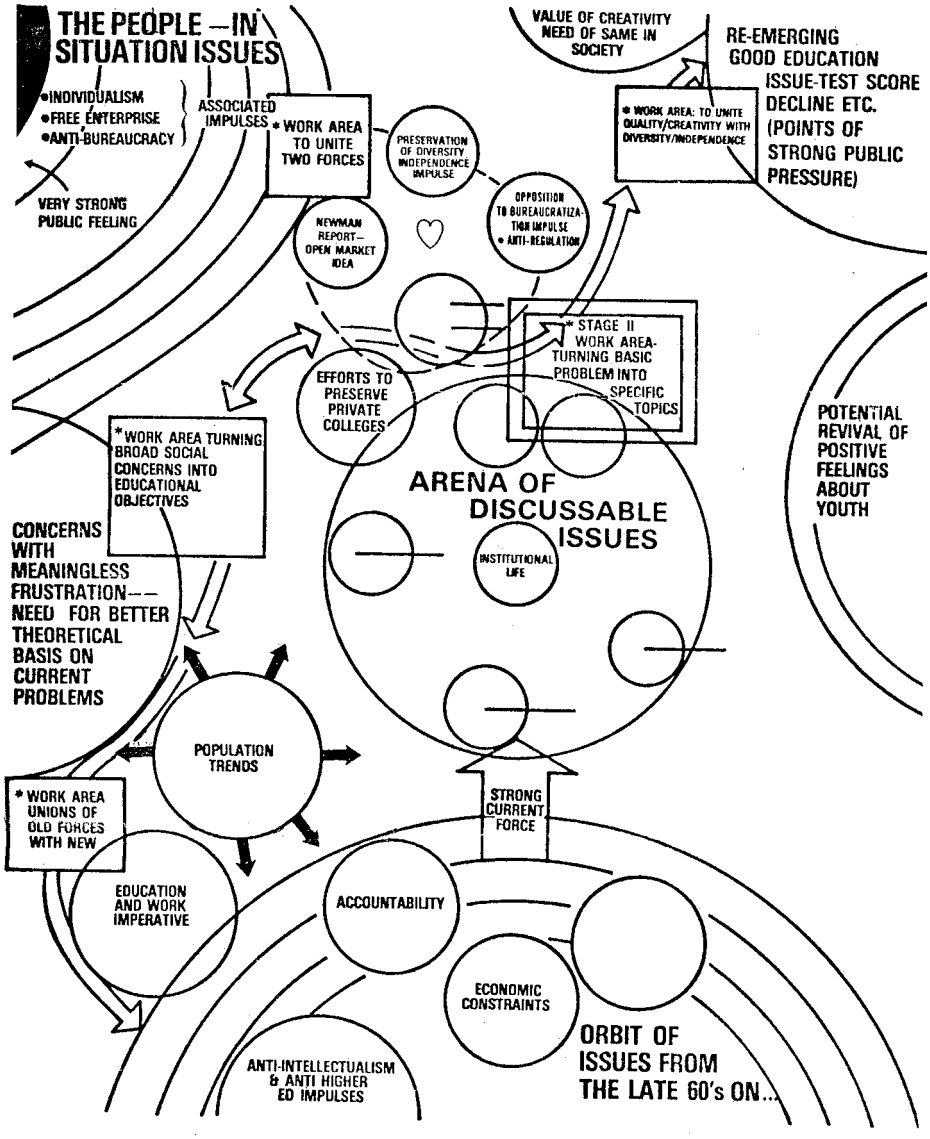
Memo of the Month

(From an HEW Policy Idea Development manual)



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The Seductions of Washington Society

by James Fallows

"Too many have had to suffer at the hands of a political and economic elite who have shaped decisions and never had to account for mistakes nor to suffer from injustice. When unemployment prevails, they never stand in line looking for a job. When deprivation results from a confused welfare system, they never do without food or clothing or a place to sleep. When the public schools are inferior or torn by strife, their children go to exclusive private schools.

"And when the bureaucracy is bloated and confused the powerful always manage to discover and occupy niches of special influence and privilege."

That is what Jimmy Carter says he's going to change in Washington, and God bless him for it. But as one surveys the wreckage of all the bright idealists who came to the capital determined to change it and never left because they had been seduced, one fears that there may be a few more obstacles than Carter has considered.

James Fallows is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

Some of them are obvious. But one of the most important, and least frequently discussed, is the power of social class.

In a nation nominally free of hereditary rank and privilege, the power of class rests on a kind of voluntary bondage. It is the power of those on the top to prey on the social and intellectual insecurities of those on the bottom; its goal is to make the lower orders believe in their own inferiority.

In Washington, the process is somewhat more delicate, since it is a minuet performed among different layers of the national upper class. But over the years, the city's upper crust has proved itself marvelously adept at using this weapon.

We need look no farther back than the reign of Lyndon Johnson to see the devastation wrought by intellectual snobbery—or rather, by snobbery about intellectual styles and Ivy League pedigrees. As Doris Kearns says in *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*, "The sad and poignant thing was not his anti-intellectualism itself, but his need to be ac-

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cepted by the very people he scorned . . . . The man's feelings toward Culture [were] subdued awe and blatant bitterness, a sense that he, unlike the Eastern intellectuals, had none of those ridiculous and precious tokens, an Ivy League education and a facility for words. 'They' came into the world fully clothed; he remained essentially naked, no matter how much power he acquired. 'My daddy always told me,' Johnson once remarked, 'that if I brushed up against the grindstone of life I'd come away with far more polish than I could ever get at Harvard or Yale. I wanted to believe him, but somehow I never could.' "

If Johnson had known his enemy better, he would have realized that he had it slightly wrong. Southwest Texas State was not really the fatal flaw. Bill Moyers, after all, had been a member of the North Texas State class of 1956, and now, barely 15 years after his arrival in the capital, he is as pure a member of the intellectual upper class as you could ever hope to find. Johnson didn't realize that there had to be a little mobility into the intellectual and cultural elite, because its whole reason for being was to circumvent the old-line aristocracy of birth, money, and name, which admitted no new members after the moment of conception. It was just a little mobility, of course, and progress was much harder for sons of the Bible Belt than for those who had sat at the tables down at Morey's. Also, the cultural elite wasted no time distinguishing *itself* from the great unwashed, using phrases such as the currently fashionable "tacky" to identify those of inferior taste. But it was still easier to become a cultural mandarin than to get away with changing your name to Saltonstall from Schwartz.

It was the Jews who first saw the light. The values of the WASP aristocracy had always included a generous portion of anti-Semitism, and Jews who hoped for social parity saw that educational, cultural, artistic, and intellectual power might be their route to the top. There was no religious test for membership in the cultural upper class that flowered after World War II —the Baptist Willie Morris and the Jewish Norman Podhoretz followed essentially similar paths to success. Richard Nixon, who in his moments of bitter jealousy could be an acute social critic, caught the spirit of the thing when he talked about "The arts, you know—they're Jews, they're left-wing—in other words, stay away."

It was not for nothing that Johnson and Nixon thought the intellectuals scorned them. They did—sometimes for good reasons, quite often for bad. A sneer from the mandarins brought out Johnson's worst side, and made sure that, if there was such a thing as a good side to Nixon, we never saw it at all.

But these intellectual insecurities are only half the story. Although the Astors and Cabots have seen more glorious days, old-fashioned class snobbery is far from dead. Nowhere is it better illustrated than in the proudest hero of our liberal imaginations; John Bartlow Martin's new biography of Adlai Stevenson* provides a rich portrait of the snob at work and play.

Stevenson was the grandson of a Vice President and the son of an upper-class dilettante. In his youth he was a gadabout dandy who got gentleman's Cs, flunked out of Harvard Law School, and thought that going to Princeton was the most marvelous thing that could happen to a fellow. As he wrote to his mother after his first days on campus, "Yesterday was quite a gala day here for the freshmen. But before explaining it all you must remember that all the fellows who are here in the freshman class are not freshmen, but only those that entered by examinations, as I did. In other words, all the fellows that came in on certificate, etc., to join the military organizations are not ranked as Princeton men and are not included in the class of 1922. I certainly am glad that I came in by exams and am a real Princeton man. Although it is very dif-

**Adlai Stevenson of Illinois.* John Bartlow Martin. Doubleday, $15.

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ficult to maintain all the old college customs, etc., the difference between the regular Princeton men and the others is very obvious. For instance whenever 'Old Nassau' or any of the other Princeton songs are sung, the non-regular men are not allowed to sing and have to stand at attention."

Class, Politics, and Condescension

As part of the whole package, Stevenson engaged in casual anti-Semitism. After reporting one of his subject's many anti-Semitic wisecracks, Martin says, "The remark about Jews just noted was not an isolated instance. It flawed Stevenson's attitudes for years. In considering it, one must remember that Stevenson was, like us all, a product of his time and his place. His place was the Midwest, plus Eastern schools attended largely by the sons of the wealthy, white, Protestant, and well-born; during those years and in those places and among those people, such utterances were simply made heedlessly."

When he deigned to enter the world of politics, Stevenson did it with the same barely veiled condescension with which Averell Harriman presented himself to the voters of New York. Through an intermediary who had one foot in the rich society of Chicago's Gold Coast and another in the Democratic machine, Stevenson proposed a deal. He would organize the Democratic voters in the Gold Coast, all six of them, if the party boss, Matthias "Paddy" Bauler, would give him a place in the delegation to the 1936 convention.

Bauler dismissed him with a snort, which caused Stevenson to lick his wounds in a letter to his go-between: "You more than did your part, and I appreciate it. Bauler's reply is, I presume, a characteristic commentary on our current municipal politics. While, insofar as it affects me personally, I am disappointed in his complete indifference, I am far more concerned with the implication of thoughtless disregard of long-range party welfare.

"The attitude of to hell with him and the east end of the ward is a brief and eloquent answer to the familiar question as to why more men like yourself [and myself, he might as well have said] don't take an active part in our municipal politics."

In his later years, Stevenson was too kind a man to scorn Johnson and Truman for having been to bad colleges or lacking a middle name, and his anti-Semitism was brought under tight control. But he wore his Oxford honorary-degree robe whenever he could, and never seemed to forget that neither Truman nor Johnson possessed a Princeton necktie. In the charming acronym of society ladies, they were NOCD (Not Our Class, Dearie).

Of course, no one really cares about the Social Register any more—no one, that is, except those who are not in it. And when one solid, respectable, Social Register name is put under the same yoke with a member of the intellectual *creme*, you have a team that can outpull anyone else around. The career of Frances Fitz-Gerald has always seemed a marvelous

Adlai Stevenson and his sister Buffie touring Switzerland in 1920.

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demonstration of this point. She began life as aristocrat, heiress of the Massachusetts Peabodies, daughter of Marietta Tree (who was herself one of Adlai Stevenson's aristocratic intimate friends). These days she is, on the strength of *Fire in the Lake*, a widely respected leader of her trade. But long before that book appeared, when her collected *oeuvre* consisted of one or two magazine articles, she was being hailed as one of the great journalists of the day. At this point in her career, we may agree or disagree with that judgment—we at *The Washington Monthly* gave her book our annual Political Book Award. But the acclaim that greeted Frances FitzGerald when her first words saw print seemed inexplicable in any normal way. In the dark recesses of the heart, one suspected that something else was going on. Much as the Public Broadcasting System bowed down in embarrassing adoration when Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to President Ford, much as the "intellectual" programs like *Civilisation* required the plummy accent of Kenneth Clark rather than Howard Cosell's, much as every classical music station in the country has an announcer who learned to speak somewhere between Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Cambridge, England, the intellectual world gave its heart to Good Breeding once again. The hard-boiled men of the lit-biz were eager to see sparkles around this princess in its midst.

Fame and Mutual Flattery

Our current princess is Lally Weymouth, the daughter of Katharine Graham. In the last two years, she has edited one book of essays about Thomas Jefferson and put together another collection about life in 1876. The books are perfectly respectable, the building blocks of a professional career. But in the case of Lally Weymouth they have been a pre-fab mansion of success. The latest one is an alternate selection of the Book of the Month Club; Lally Weymouth is featured as a Famous Author in *People* magazine.

(In the introduction to her book, Lally Weymouth shows that she knows her Ps from her Qs. She gives her generous thanks to *Mr.* John Winthop Aldrich, *Mrs.* Vincent Astor, *Mr.* Averell Harriman, *Mr.* Paul Mellon, and *Mr.* Louis Auchincloss, and then turns to plain old Jason Epstein and a score of other non-Mr. and Mrs.

Washington has its own combinations, even more subtle in admixture. One real life example may serve: a lawyer for a corporate firm holds salons, where the distinguished from several walks of life get together. At a typical gathering there might be one member of the White House staff, a liberal Democratic congressman, the editors of two respected magazines, a film director, and representatives of the city's old-rich and rich-rich elements. It is the many worlds of culture all in one place, and how mutually flattering it is to everyone involved.

Every member of such a group gets a little and gives a little as he rubs elbows with the wonderful. The White House staffers—the Jody Powells and Hamilton Jordans of the future—give the most, in terms of power and prestige, but they also get the most, in fulfillment of long-smothered dreams. There is no doubt no insecurity so painful, so deep, that someone in the group cannot at least temporarily assuage it. Was your wife frozen out by the Junior League in Atlanta? Well come right here, and meet the directors of the Washington Junior League. Have you silently chafed because your accent is bad and your college degree worse? Here are six famous professors, who are obviously flattered to be talking to you. Have you dreamed of being an intellectual and an author? Here is the editor of the magazine that used to leave you cowed, now asking your considered judgment about Carter's new populism. Have you lived in the valley and yearned for the house on the hill? Mr. Wellborn, who happens to own a bank, may help you

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Diana H. Walker

Hamilton Jordan

out with your mortgage. Whatever impediments of ambition or insecurity that the Carter men bring into Washington, there are those in town who can give them relief.

It is possible that Jimmy Carter is immune to all blandishments. The man who ran for President because he lost his awe for the competition is not the one to need reassurance and flattery. It is possible, too, that his aides will work 20 hours a day for his cause and have no time left over for frivolity or socializing.

But if history and common sense are any guide, the Carter aides may find that they need some of the things that Washington's higher society can provide. At the convention, they trooped around with Hunter Thompson; they celebrated at 21. Hamilton Jordan has already tried (and as of the convention had failed), to get a book contract and extend his fame to the world of the intellect. Margot Hahn, a prominent local hostess, gave Rosalyn Carter hints on where to find *the* right dresses in New York, so that she would not run the risk of being embarrassed at the convention.

Perilous Friends

If Carter's people do embrace the social groups, there are several dangers at hand. One is that they lose interest in challenging the group that offers them so much. It has happened to good men before; one first-rate reporter got a publisher's advance for a book about Washington's mighty figures, and several years later had to mail it back because the subjects had become his friends. It is both a matter of civility and a question of status; one is judged, often enough, by the quality of one's friends, and with friends that are the best in town, there is small reason to offend gratuitously.

There is a further delicious subtlety, which is that many of these new friends will be genuinely loyal. They are the people who will not let you down, when the dark hour arrives and it is time to go home again. Four years, eight years, may seem like forever when the administration is new, but all around are reminders that this glory too will pass. There, at the corner table, is the man who was a big shot in the Truman years. That man, holding his glasses and massaging the bridge of his nose, had the town at his feet when Kennedy was in the White House. They thought it would last too.

But it did not last, and when it was over they did not want it to end for them. California and Missouri and Texas might have been enough before, but not now. Friends were in Washington; the action was in Washington; the sense of belonging to the class that caused events, rather than reacting to them, could only be found here, or in the metropolis stretching north to Boston. Walter Jenkins went home, and so did Bob Finch, but they were the exceptions. The Carter men will learn that it is a much longer trip from Washington to Georgia than it seemed on the way up.

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Learning this, prudent men look for safety nets. They realize that a group of well-connected friends can keep them in town. Their friends will help them find the berths—in the good law firms, on the Hill, at the World Bank, with Brookings—that enable them to hang on. Without friends they might be left in the cold.

As they learn, the White House men step carefully. They are less willing to upset the applecart of the group. And there is a second danger, which is that exchanges are being made. Most of them are intangible—your political power for my intellectual prestige—but some involve hard trading as well. The basic pattern is one dear to our culture, in the form of the small town Rotary Club. You buy from the Rotarian druggist, he goes to the Rotarian lawyer, the lawyer comes to your Rotarian store. You all overcharge each other a little, but the group helps ensure the survival of each member. The problem that arises when the pattern is transferred to Washington is that some of the Rotarians are public servants. What they have to exchange is not theirs but the public's. The banker offers his preferential mortgages, and the lawyer his services, but only the men from the White House and the Hill have the public favors to dispense.

Frailties of the Spirit

What hope, then, for the Carter men? One rule is that they should not allow it to become important to them to get invited *back*, to the Harrimans or the Fritcheys or the Grahams. They should not shut themselves off from social intercourse, in the fashion of H.R. (Bob) Haldeman or I.F. (Izzy) Stone; there is too much they lose in the process, it becomes too hard to know what other people think. But they must be wary of the IOUs they are running up and the commitments they are making. The only gift they should let themselves give is their presence—and even that only with caution and control. Some Washingtonians are perfectly capable of parlaying that presence into the appearance of influence that they can then peddle, sometimes with such discretion that only another cynical Washingtonian will recognize what's going on.

These temptations are hard to own up to, let alone to control. In my first years at college I wasted a lot of money and even more time on a luncheon society for the more "creative" students. As soon as decency allowed, old members angling for your initiation fee pointed out that T.S. Eliot had been a member in his undergraduate days. The rest was left to Aristotelian syllogism: T.S. Eliot was a member; I am a member; therefore . . . . The same thing, of course, applies to the dinner parties that the luncheon society was meant to prepare me for, and to which Carter's people will no doubt be invited: Why, Averell Harriman's here, the thought will run, and Jackie Onassis is here, and over across the way is John Kenneth Galbraith, so that must mean that I. . . .

The reason for dwelling on these frailties of the spirit is that they do hold much of the key to Carter's success. If his men don't deal with these problems, they will become part of the "Washington" their leader wants to change. Once that happens, they are helpless to produce their reforms.

To end on a bright note, we might point out that so far the Carter staff has shown the right spirit. Richard Reeves has reported on an incident that, if its philosophy persists, will keep the newcomers out of trouble:

"Ann Pincus, a Washington hostess of some note, met Hamilton Jordan for the first time in an elevator at the Americana Hotel during the first day of the Democratic National Convention. 'We'll be getting to know each other much better in Washington,' she said. 'But the way, are you called J*or*dan or J*er*dan?'

" 'My friends call me Jerdan,' he said, smiling. 'But you can call me Jordan.' " ■

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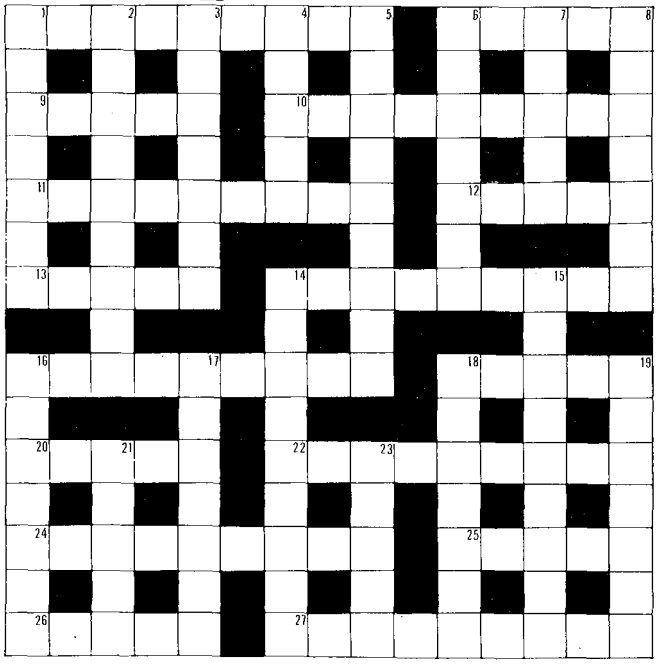
the political puzzle

by John Barclay



ACROSS

1. German car about to lose no. 1 spot? (5,4)
6. Much ado about pelt alternative? (5)
9. Join bandwagon in Soho pond. (3,2)
10. Stood awkwardly, as stadium urged? (9)
11. Had too much, so refused, it appears. (9)
12. Country from state, but not applicable not applicable. (5)
13. Places to live in little New England streets. (5)
14. Jungle beast upsets Northern Argonaut. (9)
16. He puffs and spoke most shakily. (6,3)
18. May in France comes before Northeast, down East. (5)
20. With article in or else. (5)
22. Snake swallows jewelry? Right, and you have a fine sail. (9)
24. Italian food arranged for tight apes. (9)
25. Alert after ship or man passes. (5)
26. Shabby but worth making a try at. (5)
27. Reagan offered GOP some rich weeks. (9)

DOWN

1. Followed Lincoln and Kennedy. (7)
2. Toper rots, but after composure checks with boss. (7,2)
3. Lou, Joe, and Micky. (7)
4. Path to go round with closed teeth after conjuction. (5)
5. Conscription of feathers may put fire out? (4-5)
6. To fling with ease engenders emotion. (7)
7. Stormed and made the grade. (5)
8. New plans made by Andrew R. (7)
14. Soot pipes lead to quite different things. (9)
15. Where the brain drain goes? (5,4)
16. Pro's son could be the man behind it. (7)
17. A lathery mixture is conceivable. (7)
18. Damn Leo, anyway, for this candidate. (7)
19. Muff or ring, for example. (7)
21. Center for the arts. (5)
23. Boston immigrants display of temper? (5)

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2, 3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word. Answers to last month's puzzle are on page 47.

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A Kind Word for the Spoils System

by Charles Peters

On July 22, Joseph Young, a reliable columnist who covers the civil service for *The Washington Star*, wrote a story with this headline:

"Carter Aides Assure
U. S. Careerists
They Won't Lose Jobs"

It thus appears that Jimmy Carter has committed himself to reforming the bureaucracy without firing anyone. Young's story is backed up by the Democratic platform, which reads:

"The reorganization of government which we envision will protect the job rights of civil servants and permit them to more effectively serve the public."

This is the kind of thing one desperately wants to believe is possible when one is running for office and seeking the votes of both those who deplore the bureaucracy and those who work within it. It would be unrealistic to expect that Carter will abandon this impossible dream before election day—he has, by the way, the support of *all* the government employees' unions—but one hopes that by the time of his inauguration, he will realize that he must surrender it if he is to deliver on the central promise of his campaign: to make the government work. Indeed, there are words buried in the very next paragraph of the platform—"The Democratic Party is committed to the review and overhaul of the civil service to assure . . . accountability for nonfeasance as well as malfeasance . . . . performance standards and incentives to reward efficiency and inefficiency"—that could not be carried out without dismissals.

There are some signs that Carter thinks these objectives can be attained through attrition. The trouble is it won't work. Too often the people who resign or retire on their own are not the ones who should be fired.

And anyone who has had a reasonable amount of contact with the federal government has encountered people who should be fired. There are, of course, some superb civil servants—maybe ten per cent of the total—who have every right to become indignant at blanket criticism of government workers. There are another 50 to 60 per cent who range from adequate to good. Unfortunately, that leaves 30 or 40 per cent in the range downward from marginal to outright incompetent.

Yet fewer than one per cent are fired each year. This is because 93 per

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cent are under some form of civil service and are therefore virtually impossible to fire. We recently reported, for example, the story of an employee of the Internal Revenue Service whose discharge was overturned even though he had repeatedly reported for work dead drunk. His union successfully contended that the IRS should have established programs to detect and treat alcoholism among its employees. With that kind of thing the likely product of a series of hearings and appeals that could last for years, it is the rare administrator who will attempt to fire anyone.

Imagine yourself a supervisor with an employee who does nothing all day but read the paper and take coffee breaks. Thinking of firing him, you might turn to Title 5 of the U. S. Code and peruse parts 752.101 through 752.402 and 772.101 through 772.404, which describe one hearing and appeal right after another. By the time you reached the end of 772.404, you'd say the hell with it and toss him the sports section.

Something has to be done—even though Jimmy Carter may not want to face it now. You can't reform the government without having the power to choose the people who work within it.

Up From Civil Service

I came to this position after a long journey through government that I began on the other side of the civil service question.

In the late 1950s, while working on the staff of the West Virginia legislature, I drafted a bill designed to transform a patronage-ridden personnel system into a civil service based on merit and offering genuine career protection for state employees. Wanting to get that bill enacted into law was one of the reasons I ran for the legislature in the next election, and it was a proud day in my life when the bill, bearing my name, was passed in the following session.

Then I came to Washington. Having seen the evils of too much political patronage, I was now exposed to the evils of too much civil service. The terrible disruption of continuity that came from massive personnel changes following each election in West Virginia was offset in Washington by the excessive defensiveness and caution of civil servants primarily devoted to the protection of the institution for which they worked. If you can be fired only if your job is abolished—as is practically the case with a civil servant—then your only fear is that your agency will be diminished in size in a way that might threaten your job. Furthermore, the civil servant is not accountable to the public he is supposed to be serving. If an Elizabeth Ray is found on Capitol Hill, the Congress, which has no civil service, can fire her and the electorate can unseat Wayne Hays. But what can we do if they both work at HUD or HEW? Finally, the civil service takes two million people out of what it is fashionable to call the political process. (It used to be called just plain "politics," and the fact that, when we want it to sound good, we have to dress it up as "political process" is a sign of the depths of regard to which politics has sunk, about which more later.) Whatever you call it, it's quite a loss. Remember, 200,000 of them are superb people, and the Hatch Act forbids their making their political views known to us.*

It is widely assumed, on the other hand, that a political patronage system will result in unqualified people, not selected on merit, making decisions for partisan political reasons. Let's take a look at this assumption.

Why do political employees have to be unqualified? You can require by law that a politically appointed secretary be able to type 50 words a minute, just like the civil service ap-

*We could eliminate the Hatch Act, of course, but that would give the civil servants the political power to make their jobs even more invulnerable to politics.

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pointee. As for selection on pure merit from all the applicants, that is not done now in the civil service. As Ann Pincus pointed out in "How to Get A Government Job" in our June issue, the present civil service is a patronage machine that instead of being run on a political basis is run on the basis of friendship. You get a civil service job by knowing someone who is in the agency where you want to work. He gives you an advance tip on the opening, writes a job description tailored to fit your experience, and then requests your name from the Civil Service Commission. Isn't it possible that a job might be filled better by politicians who are interested in putting together an administration that will do a good enough job to get them reelected? The same principle applies to most other decisions. Why shouldn't they be made on a partisan basis if the motive behind them is doing a good enough job to be reelected?

The only real advantage I have seen to the career civil servant is continuity. When I worked at the Peace Corps in the 1960s, we had a five-year limit on employment. The result was the stimulation offered by a steady infusion of new blood and a much more adventurous group of employees than are attracted by the security of the civil service tenure. There was, however, the same lack of continuity I had seen in West Virginia. By the time I left, staff meetings had taken on the character of a series of broken records, as I heard problems discussed again and again as if they were brand new and the agency had no experience to suggest their solutions.

There is one other reason for not doing away with civil service tenure completely. It's that, occasionally, unwise or corrupt political decisions may threaten institutions like federal agencies, thus making it in the self-preservative interest of the civil servants who work in them to blow the whistle on whatever wrongdoing is going on. The role of the FBI and the CIA during the Watergate scandals shows how crucially important the loyalty of the civil servant to his institution can be. When people in the White House wanted to contain the investigation, it was the civil servants who rebelled, who blew the whistle, who leaked to the press. Indeed, the Watergate stories of the FBI and the CIA illustrate both the good and bad sides of the civil servant's institutional loyalty: an essential if only occasional and self-preservative willingness to stand up to political authority gone wrong, coupled with a mindless and equally self-preservative dedication to covering up his institution's own sins.

So instead of abolishing the civil service, I would urge cutting it by 50 per cent, and filling the remaining half with political appointees who can be fired at any time.

(I don't mean to imply by this, of course, that we should keep all the present *jobs* and just change *people*; it's clear that besides the problem of untouchable incompetents, there's a problem of jobs that are useless no matter who's doing them. It's a particularly thorny situation, though, because *part* of almost every job is useful—in some cases it's only 10 per cent, but it's almost never nothing at all.)

Being able to fire people is important for two reasons: 1) to permit you to hire the people you want and to get rid of those you don't want, and 2) to make it possible for you to attract the kind of risk-takers who are repelled by the safe civil service and the political emasculation it entails.

The problem with achieving all this is that for years Americans have been brainwashed by textbooks that make politics sound bad and civil service sound shiny clean. I suspect it all began when the Italian and Irish immigrants took over the elective offices in Boston and the Wasps had to figure out how to salvage something for themselves. "Politicians are inept, partisan, crooked; we are able, objective and virtuous," was their refrain, and it sounded good to their friends across the Charles at Harvard, who then put it into their textbooks from whence

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Someday I'm going to start a school that will, among other things, teach the members of one branch of government what it's like in the others. Most people who work in the five groups that govern us—the executive, legislative, and judicial branches and the press and the lobbies—have little idea about what life is like in any of the others. There are few better illustrations of this ignorance than the *Elrod v. Burns* case, discussed in the accompanying article.

In it, a majority of the Supreme Court made clear that it thought that firing a civil servant for incompetence was easy, while in fact it is almost impossible, and that the civil service system is really based on merit, instead of friendship.

The press, in turn, demonstrated its ignorance of the executive branch by failing to perceive the tragic implications of *Elrod* for all of us trying to break the hold of unaccountable technocrats on the vital organs of the government. Only Nicholas Von Hoffman—of all the men who are paid large salaries to function as political reporters and columnists—has written about this case with the slightest hint of its significance.

—Charles Peters

the doctrine spread across the land. Whatever its origin, the idea that politics and politicians are bad is now ingrained in many Americans. Not long ago a governor of my state, trying to appeal to this feeling, said of himself, "I am not a politician, I am a statesman."

We have an idiotic regard for people who are "above" politics. James Forrestal, then Secretary of Defense and one of countless possible examples, was praised by *The New York Times* for being above politics when he didn't support Truman in 1948. He and the *Times* were astounded when Truman fired him. Forrestal was a Coriolanus. For him being above politics really meant being above the mob.

We have too many Forrestals now, and what they don't understand is that being above the mob means being above the practice of democratic politics. They, and a good many of the rest of us, have forgotten that democratic politics is supposed to be the way we determine who governs this country. My colleague James Fallows recently wrote in the *Texas Monthly* that we need "the politicians, whose job is openly to ask other people for support. They can't be shy or coy or proud about it: they have to try to persuade. . . . You can't last long in such a calling if you close your ears to those who disagree; in order to persuade, you must first understand.

"On the other extreme, we have those who never have to persuade anyone of anything—or at least not very often. The exalted physician is the classic example. However kind he may be, people come to him only as supplicants, and he speaks to them with the voice of resonant authority. Professors, writers, and others of the ilk are in the same boat. They don't have to *listen* to the other side because they can pronounce rather than persuade. There are 'politics' in these professions, no doubt—but the politics is usually such a seamy, backstairs business that no one can treat it respectably. In-house politics is a dirty little game in most professional worlds; consequently anyone who actually makes his living this way can hardly merit respect. If you are really good, the thinking goes, you won't have to scramble; people will come to you with offers. This is why the intellectual community was so delighted by Walter Mondale's withdrawal from the presidential race. By pulling out he said, in effect, that anyone who is willing to run for President doesn't deserve the job. Oh joyous confirmation of all existing prejudice! We happy,

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enlightened few deserve to run the country—but of course we won't demean ourselves to try."

There is no better illustration of this attitude and its currency among conservatives and liberals alike than the recent Supreme Court case of *Elrod v. Burns*, in which Justices Brennan, Marshall, White, Stewart, and Blackmun joined in ruling that a newly elected Democratic sheriff could not fire Republican political appointees from the previous administration. Firing the appointees would violate their First Amendment rights, the Court ruled, because dismissal would punish them for having exercised those rights when they supported the losing Republican candidate for sheriff.

This is outrageous reasoning. Are the learned judges going to contend that my First Amendment rights are threatened when I run for office and am defeated? Of course not.

But is my freedom of political belief any less threatened if I run for election and lose my elected job when I'm defeated than if I support a candidate and lose my appointed job when he's defeated?

Political freedom is the freedom to run for office, to support others who run for office, and to win or lose as the electorate may decide. But the *Elrod* case says that everyone who had a political job on the day it was decided will now keep it for life. There is now no freedom for those who want to gain office by supporting other candidates who might convince the electorate they could do a better job—and who would do a better job if they could take their own team into office with them.

The Court excluded policy-making jobs from its ruling, arguing that that omission alone would be sufficient to keep the system responsive to the electorate.

What the Court forgets is that, if the government is to work, policy implementation is just as important as policy making. No matter how wise the chief, he has to have the right Indians to transform his ideas into action, to get the job done. ■

Tidbits and Outrages

Through the Rain and Snow—Eight Times

More news, this time from Gloria Borger of *The Washington Star*, on the results produced by the new non-political managers at the Post Office:

"Mail trucks at the District's post office have been on a merry-go-round, with some vehicles driven in circles through weighing devices as many as eight times to inflate mail volume and exaggerate productivity records as much as 110 per cent, according to an audit by the General Accounting Office.

"The study confirms earlier Postal Inspection Service charges reported in *The Star* that the District's main post office fraudulently weighed mail more than once to upgrade embarrassing productivity statistics."

Poor Little Policy Analysts

Federal salaries are going up again in October, but only, of course, because there's so much real need out there in the civil service. The chronically underprivileged Department of Defense, for instance, now has 60,000 civilian employees making between $22,900 and $37,800 a year. Don't write us—send your donations directly to the Pentagon.

What Really Matters Is That It's Fair

Judicial activism no doubt has praiseworthy aspects, but they are not evident in this story told by Jacqueline Bolder in *The Washington Star*:

In August 1974, a federal judge ruled that the District of Columbia had to bill 30,000 homeowners for a few pennies' extra property tax, and send another 35,000 refunds of less than 50 cents each.

Nearly 8,000 of the people billed didn't pay, perhaps because they didn't take the bills, which were as low as two cents each, seriously. Altogether, the District was owed about $1,000—so it reissued the bills.

Which cost $1,573.

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Thinking Like a Lawyer (continued)

We've been following with great enthusiasm the *U.S. v. IBM* antitrust case, which keeps hundreds of lawyers terribly busy filing memoranda and documents and taking testimony that will cover every conceivable point of antitrust law. The case should be with us at least into the 1980s, and lately the judge has been wondering out loud if he'll survive it.

Computer Decisions captured some of the lively flavor of the case when it reprinted some testimony from a similar, earlier marathon lawsuit, *Telex v. IBM*. In the passage here, Mr. Walker is a Telex lawyer, Mr. Shelton is an IBM employee being cross-examined, and Mr. Goodfriend is an IBM lawyer. Read and weep:

Mr. Walker: During the period that you were an Associate Financial Analyst, will you tell us and describe to us the nature and extent of your job responsibilities?

Mr. Shelton: At that point I didn't do a lot.

W: Okay. Did you work under the supervision of other people to a large extent during that first eight to 10 months?

S: Yes.

W: Did you receive any kind of specialized training during that eight to 10 months, any schooling or training at IBM?

S: I don't quite understand the question.

W: Well, you know what schooling is.

S: Yes.

W: All right. Did you receive any schooling at IBM during the first eight to 10 months you were there?

S: Again, I—could you explain that just a little bit more?

W: Mr. Shelton, after your first eight to 10 months on the job at IBM as an Associate Financial Analyst, did you receive another job title?

S: Yes.

W: What was that?

S: Senior Associate.

W: Senior Associate Financial Analyst. Is that correct?

S: Yes.

W: How long did you remain a Senior Associate Financial Analyst? Do you have any judgment at all, your best estimate?

S: Two years.

W: Will you describe the nature and extent of your job responsibilities during the approximate two-year period that you were a Senior Associate Financial Analyst on the Group Staff at Data Processing Headquarters in Harrison?

Mr. Goodfriend: I object to the form of the question. You may answer if you can. (Attorneys for both parties agreed that only objections to the form of a question could be made.)

S: Well, I don't understand the question.

W: Well, during the period that you were a Senior Associate Financial Analyst, were you still on the Data Processing Group Staff?

S: Yes.

W: Did you still work at Harrison?

S: I don't fully understand that.

W: I'm sorry. I cannot hear you.

S: I don't fully understand that one.

W: Would you describe the nature of your job responsibilities and the things that you did during that period of time?

G: I object to the form of the question. You may answer. Off the record. (Discussion off the record.)

S: Would you read the question? (Pending question read.)

S: I did financial analysis.

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Why the Sun Will Never Set on the Federal Empire

by Nicholas Lemann

Little tremors of Jimmy Carter were already being felt in Washington this spring, when the Federal Energy Administration came up for extension. Last year or the year before, the FEA, set up as a temporary agency but trying to stay alive past its June 30 expiration date, might have run the legislative gauntlet with no trouble at all. This year, challenges were mounted by people bearing the banner of anti-bureaucracy, and the agency was extended for only 18 months, less than half the time it had wanted. It was enough to embitter considerably the FEA's own officials, who think they became a sacrificial lamb because it was their misfortune to be the only federal agency to come before Congress for renewal during the period of Carter's ascendancy.

What's more surprising than the heat put on the FEA this spring, however—there should, for other agencies, be a lot more of that to come—is how adroitly the FEA escaped it. Using a combination of advance entrenchment tactics and, later, effective responses to criticism, the FEA really made itself untouchable in a way that could serve as a model for other agencies threatened over the next four years. It may in fact be Carter, and not the other agencies, who should learn the tactics of bureaucratic survival—the chances are that most agencies know them too well already.

When Carter talks about cutting "1,900 federal agencies to 200 at most," and about instituting "sunset laws" that place an expiration date on

Nicholas Lemann is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

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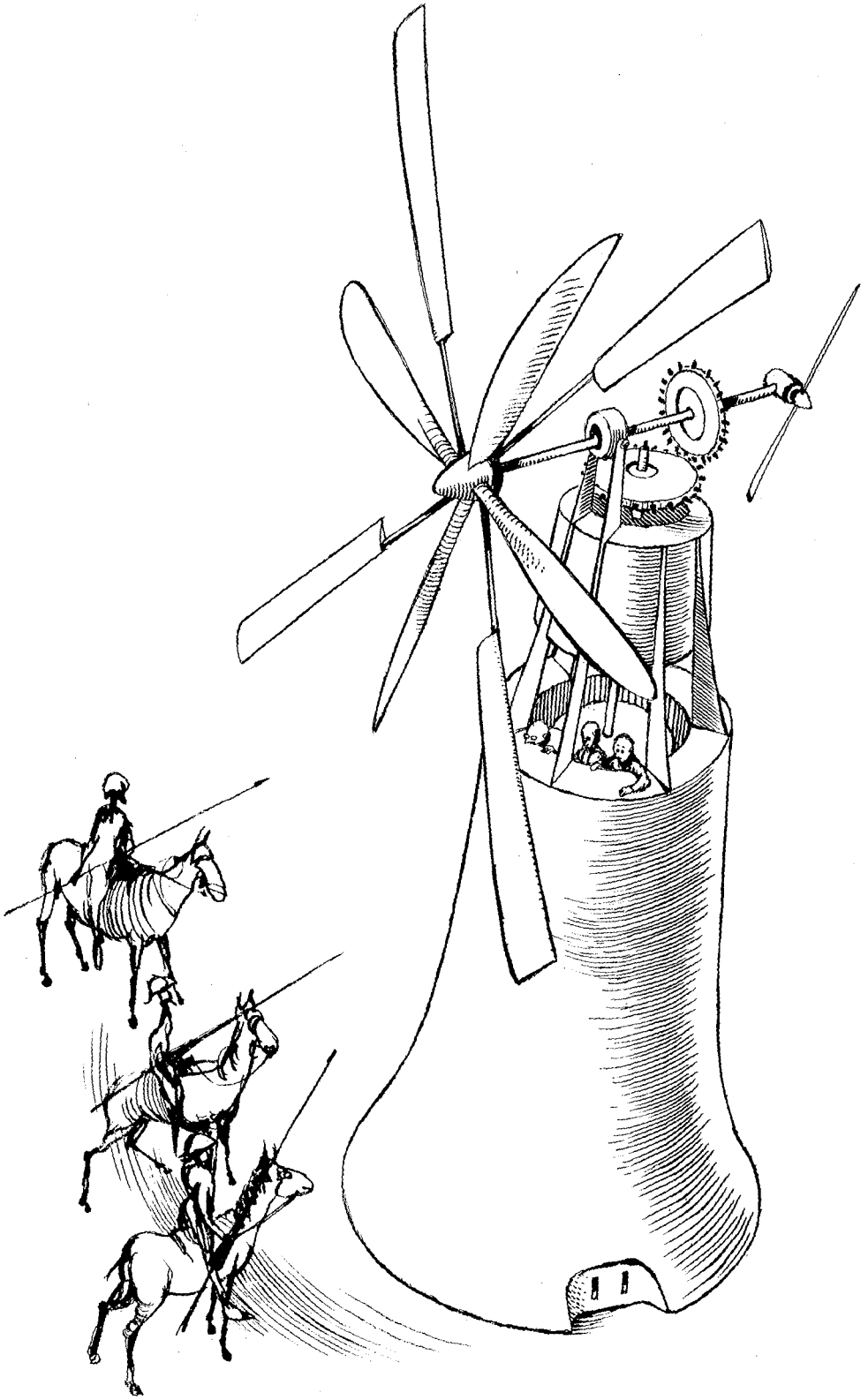

David Suter

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the lives of agencies, it's unclear how well he understands the forces he'll have to contend with in the process. If the FEA's experience this spring and summer is any indication, the process of forcing agencies out of existence will be an extremely tricky one. The FEA drew on a series of deep-rooted, widely applicable first principles of entrenchment on which every imperiled agency is sure to rely.

The Standing Army Principle

Somewhere back in the mists of history, a military man had an inspiration that has since provided the justification for countless legions of bureaucrats. Like all great ideas, it was breathtakingly simple: instead of nations raising armies only when the need arises—in wartime—they should have standing armies always on the ready, just in case. So it is with the FEA, or any agency set up to deal with a sudden and extreme situation. The point is not to exist only when disaster actually strikes, but at any time when it might conceivably strike.

The FEA was created in rudimentary form in the late fall of 1973 to deal with the immediate exigencies of the Arab oil embargo; the idea then was that the embargo and the energy crisis were one and the same, and that the FEA would regulate oil and gas and promote conservation for a couple of years, until the crisis had passed. It was supposed to be a militia, in other words, and now, sure enough, it's a standing army.

The principle by which it changed was energy independence, according to which the United States shouldn't import any fuel at all and thereby be permanently immune to future embargoes. It's a testament to how confused public issues can become that now virtually everyone in politics and government accepts energy independence as an article of faith, although it has a number of obvious disadvantages—pollution and strip mining from increased use of coal, safety hazards from a substantial rise in the number of nuclear plants, and higher oil and gas prices for consumers. Be that as it may, if you're for energy independence it's because you think there may be another Arab embargo. If that were out of the question, there would be no reason not to keep on importing oil.

Which is where the FEA comes in. Just as generals and admirals talk about arms races and first-strike capabilities. . . *just in case*. . . the FEA's officials, particularly Frank G. Zarb, its administrator, are constantly warning Congress and the public of the imminence of another embargo. They can't, of course, cite specific dates or speak in certainties, but within those limits they don't leave much doubt. There is delicate phrasing involved in this; instead of saying there *will* be another embargo, Zarb says things like this: "We've had three embargo situations in the last 15 or 20 years, and there's not much to suggest that there won't be another."

Even if you take Zarb at his word and expect another embargo, it's possible to diverge from his all-out energy independence policy. The main issue is not *whether* there will be another embargo, but how long it will last, since its length will determine its effect on America. The last embargo lasted five months. We now have in reserve enough oil to last, if it is consumed at the rate we consume Arab oil, more than a year and a half. To be successful, then, a new embargo would have to last considerably longer than the last one.

The problem is not solely economic, but political as well. The Arab economy is badly hurt by any reductions in their shipments to us—the recession proved that—so it is in their interest to keep selling us oil at a fast clip. In other words, we are neither the only ones with a strong incentive to avoid another embargo nor the only ones who would want to keep an embargo that *did* start as short as possible. We rely on the Arabs, granted, but they rely on us too; there is a political calculus at work that stabilizes

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the situation. And as long as that balance is maintained it would seem to make sense for us to buy as much oil as we can from the Arabs now, instead of relying on increased (and exhaustable) domestic production, as the FEA would have us do. It's important to see the FEA's extension in this light, as based on an assumption that is (though you wouldn't know it) highly disputable.

Zarb does a great deal of traveling, and almost everywhere he goes he talks about energy independence, our increasing oil imports, being at the mercy of OPEC, and so forth, no doubt leaving his audiences thinking, thank God for the FEA. More than that, though, he ties in energy independence to the grandest possible American themes. Consider this, from a Zarb speech in April:

"Just as in 1776, the United States is today undergoing broad, basic changes—and facing new, critical challenges. The challenges may be different today, yet in a very basic way, they are like those faced by the Founding Fathers of the republic.

"The challenges of 1976, like those two centuries earlier, concern our economic and political survival."

Any thought of the FEA's own institutional self-interest is swept away here by the agency's closeness to America's purpose, indeed the nation's continued existence as a democracy. If its critics see it as the boy who cried wolf, the FEA sees itself as Paul Revere. In this context self-preservation does not appear to play a part at all; the FEA is full of people who simply believe in the importance of what they are doing. Zarb needed no prompting when he forthrightly told a Senate committee in April that no FEA official "will testify in favor of the status quo simply for the benefit of the status quo. Our interests are in developing the best possible energy capability to solve what we consider to be a terribly important problem. . . regardless of how it affects the current institutions in government."

Of course, there's more to becoming a standing army than just working out the ideology of it. It helps a great deal to be written into a law or a series of laws, so that whatever happens to your intellectual basis you'll remain untouchable in practice. Granted, laws are hard to pass, but for the same reason they're hard to change, and once Congress goes through all the effort of passing a major piece of legislation it's likely to move on quickly to other matters and hardly ever reexamine its actions. The legislation creating an agency develops, through inertia, a life of its own, leaving the agency much safer than if it merely existed under the fickle auspices of an executive order.

Sunset laws containing ironclad expiration dates can wreak havoc on all that safety, but even then there is an out: get mentioned in other laws. The FEA had a death clause in the legislation that created it, but along the way to its deadline it picked up a number of long-lasting legislative responsibilities, because Congress kept passing energy laws that had nowhere but the FEA to go for administration. So while it was originally just supposed to get us through the Arab embargo, the FEA is now responsible for, among other things, the gradual decontrol of oil prices, the even more gradual stockpiling of emergency oil reserves, production incentives, adjustment limitations, coal conversion programs, appliance labeling rules, and automobile efficiency standards. All this allows FEA officials, asked why they're trying to stay alive, to shrug and point to all the programs Congress and President Ford have ordered them to carry out—programs that they mostly advocated in the first place, but that's quibbling.

The Corps of Engineers Corollary

Once you have a standing army, you have to figure out something for it to do in peacetime. What the United States Army did was set up a Corps of Engineers that builds dams and bridges, administers flood relief, and

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takes on other tasks not directly related to fighting wars but wonderfully consuming of time. What the FEA has done over the years is turn its temporary problem into a permanent *potential* problem, and establish itself as the chief worrier about it. Thus a goodly portion of its tasks have to do with pushing energy independence, urging people to conserve, promoting the development of alternative energy sources, and so on—anything that could conceivably make us less vulnerable to another embargo. It has offices of solar and nuclear energy, of coal and synthetic fuels. Even as a regulator, it established a system of rules and audits so complicated as to require the full-time attention of thousands of people in government and industry.

The crown jewel of the FEA's several functions, however, is without a doubt the strategic storage reserve plan, designed to put the federal government in full control of one billion barrels of oil, just in case there is another embargo. In order to do this, the FEA will spend the next ten years buying the oil (carefully, so as not to upset the economy) and storing it in underground salt domes. The first 50 million barrels stored will cost about $800 million. If the whole thing sounds a little futuristic and impractical, well, they laughed at Cassandra too. The project should keep the FEA busy well into the foreseeable future, and taken together with its other promoting, regulating, and deregulating tasks, it makes abolition of the agency virtually impossible.

The Piece of the Action Policy

Once an agency, through assiduous application of the Standing Army Principle and the Corps of Engineers Corollary, has firmly established its purpose, it remains for it to establish itself institutionally in the federal bureaucracy. The way to accomplish this is through the exercise of a bureaucratic golden rule: if there's anyone else who could be a permanent enemy, turn him into a friend by giving him a piece of your action. Thus has the FEA won the friendship of the rest of the American system: the President, Congress, other agencies, the press, and business. Like any standing army it has something—usually the glamor of being on the forefront of the criticial energy issue, sometimes even spin-off jobs for reporters, bureaucracts or congressional staff—to offer every one, and in return it gets treated gently by people who could have done it considerable damage.

President Ford, for instance, is a strong believer in energy independence and a national energy policy. Why shouldn't he be? The FEA helps him stay active and popular on the energy front by providing him with advice and implementing our energy policy—just as the standing army's existence implies for the President a firm stand on defense. It's no surprise that Ford proposed the extension of the FEA until 1979.

And that extension had little trouble in Congress, which points to another healthy relationship between the FEA and a potential adversary with a stake in the agency's future. An agency with fewer scruples than the FEA has as its major way of establishing good will with Congress the regulatory favor—giving some kind of break to prominent constituents of key congressmen, or throwing a little business their way. But the FEA has a different kind of advantage: the popularity of the energy issue. If not many people really understand energy, everybody needs to have a position on it, and it's good politics for a member of Congress to be able to tell his constituents that he's *doing something* about energy.

To deal with its popularity on Capitol Hill, the FEA has a congressional relations staff of 46 people. They answer 600 phone calls and 145 letters a week. They check up on the energy-related legislation being proposed—about a tenth of all legislation these days. These statistics cer-

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tainly testify to the FEA's hard work; the congressional relations office is efficient, quick in answering its mail and phone calls, impressive in its accumulation of overtime hours. This is the kind of thing that keeps Congress happy.

It is not, however, a testament to Congress's efficiency in dealing with energy. One of the great misconceptions about Washington is that since the government is so big, people in it don't work hard. In fact, in some areas—new agencies, for instance—they work much harder than people outside government, but the utility of the work they do is what is doubtful. The FEA has testified before 96 congressional committees and subcommittees, for instance, for no better reason than that everybody in Congress wants a piece of the glamorous energy issue. For the same reason, the present Congress has held 628 energy-related hearings. The people at the FEA who are spending long and laborious hours answering mail, or scheduling committee testimony, are doing so only because there are people on the Hill working equally hard writing those letters and organizing those hearings. The FEA publishes six daily, two weekly, and one biweekly reports when Congress is in session, only because someone somewhere else is spending all his time reading them. The system makes everyone involved busy and happy, but it doesn't make much difference to the national welfare.

Forceful Leadership

There's also a higher level of dealing with Congress—meetings between high agency officials and prominent members at which the issues are discussed but good will is also fostered.

In June, for instance, when FEA extension was on the floor of the House and Senate, Zarb, between trips to Israel and Japan, spent an hour with the chairman of the House subcommittee that oversees the FEA; an hour with the five senators with whom he holds a monthly energy briefing; an hour with a member of the staff of the Senate committee overseeing the FEA; an hour with three other senators to discuss FEA extension, among other issues; shorter time with three congressmen individually; and so on. He also did a short television taping with one member of Congress that undoubtedly made the member look as if his forceful leadership were helping steer us through the energy crisis.

In general, beyond their frequent appearances at hearings, Zarb and the other high officials of the FEA keep up a steady pace of visits to the Hill. This year, some of the visits have been explicitly about extension and some about other issues, but all have had the effect of building friendly relations—particularly since those who get visited the most are often the FEA's most prominent friends. By law, the agency can't lobby for its own continued life, but the regular routine of two or three FEA visits a week to the Hill to discuss its extension (leaving aside other matters) accomplishes the same things lobbying would, even more artfully.

The House and Senate committees overseeing an agency are obviously of particular importance to it, but their friendship is usually easier to win than that of congressmen in general. The reason is that a committee and its agency often have a symbiotic relationship, each depending on the other for continued survival. A congressional committee—or, if that can't be gotten, a subcommittee, which is almost as good—has as much self-preservative instinct as a federal agency, since it gives all its members power and visibility and its chairman a whole new staff and set of offices.

Acumen and Hustling

The House committee that considered FEA extension was the Energy and Power Subcommittee of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce; it came into existence in 1975

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and would probably fade out if the FEA were abolished. So it's not surprising that the subcommittee's chairman, Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, and Zarb see eye to eye; if their politics are alike, so are their self-interests. During Dingell's subcommittee hearings on the FEA extension, the atmosphere was hardly one of tough, skeptical inquiry. Dingell called Zarb "my good friend" and generally made no secret of his admiration, and he steered the questioning of more hostile members of the subcommittee so as to do minimal damage to the FEA's cause. When grousing was done, it was done by Dingell and FEA officials in harmony and directed against the stingy Office of Management and Budget.

In the Senate, there was a different kind of conflict. The committee holding hearings on the FEA's extension was Government Operations, which has no institutional stake in the FEA's future. The problem was more specific.

It starts with a man named Charles Wallace, an oil-and-gas businessman who, depending on who is telling the story, has built himself a fortune either through brilliant financial acumen or through hustling the federal government out of a lot of money. In early 1975 Wallace approached the FEA about an oil refinery he wants to build in Tuskegee, Alabama. He wanted the FEA, through various regulatory machinations, to arrange the oil economy so that he would be subsidized by the big oil companies. His position was that he had the financing and the oil (expensive Venezuelan crude) for the refinery all lined up, and that he needed only certain dispensations from the FEA to get underway; he was giving the FEA the opportunity to help the small-business energy economy and open up new jobs. From the FEA's standpoint, Wallace wanted a free ride. He asked for exceptions to nonexistent rules, and guarantees the FEA couldn't provide. He kept escalating his requests. He got one round of favors, and wanted another, and the FEA decided to give him a firm no.

There the matter rested until this spring, when Senators James Buckley of New York and John Sparkman and James Allen of Alabama, along with Rep. Bill Nichols of Alabama, lobbied the FEA on Wallace's behalf. Allen, a member of the Senate committee that was holding hearings on FEA extension, inserted an amendment into the FEA extension legislation that would require the agency to "carry out a program that would assist the construction of new, grass roots refineries"—that is, its larger implications notwithstanding, giving Wallace what he wants. The FEA opposed the amendment.

What is wrong here is the temptation presented to the FEA: at a time when the agency was up for extension, some of the people in Congress responsible for extending it asked the agency to do something for them. In other, closer agency survival struggles, this kind of situation will undoubtedly come up, and the agencies involved might not be so noble about refusing requests that would bring them votes.

What Was Whose

Also worthy of attention is the delicate matter of getting along with other agencies, particularly apparently competing ones. The FEA had to face this problem in 1975, when Congress created the the Energy Research and Development Administration, a huge offshoot of the Atomic Energy Commission charged with figuring out and promoting ways for us to make more and import less energy. Since the FEA already had created a coal office, a nuclear office, a solar office, an office of energy research and development, and so on (plus things that conflict with long-established agencies, like a diplomacy-related office of international energy affairs), it was open to duplication-of-effort charges.

The first hearings on FEA extension in the Senate began on April 26;

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and four days later, on April 30, Zarb and the director of the Energy Research and Development Administration signed an official four-page "memorandum of understanding" that "formalizes the corresponding working relationship" between the two agencies. In other words, the two agencies drew up a treaty demarking what was whose. Zarb described the difference between them as "the relationship that the marketing division of a corporation has with the research and engineering division." As to the potential conflict with State, one FEA administrator told a House subcommittee, barely comprehensibly:

"Our relationship with State is perhaps one of service in some respect. It is one of coequal in others with respect to service. The State Department Office of Fuels and Energy within the Economic Bureau is a small group which establishes the broad framework of a negotiating strategy, perhaps, and overall policy objectives that include political as well as economic and more specifically energy within them. . . . We provide, therefore, technical and energy specific backup on virtually all of the delegations."

Obviously some of this staking out of territory is sensible and more than just power-grabbing; but it is just as obvious that an explanation could be dreamed up for practically any duplication of effort. FEA officials say that a cabinet-level department of energy would wipe out all overlapping, but it is at the same time hard to imagine that anyone in a federal energy-related job will be out on the street when the new agency is created. The point is that even if competing agencies are set up, it is in their long-range interest to iron out their differences on their own, rather than having them aired before a hostile committee.

An agency shouldn't forget the press, either, because it can, particularly through its influence on Congress, be a powerful ally. Learning this lesson well has been part of the special genius of the FEA, and it has assiduously spread its energy message across the nation. Its public affairs office had at one time 225 employees (this in an agency of 3,500) and has since leveled off at 122, with a $3.5-million budget. It has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising and promotion of energy conservation ("Don't Be Fuelish") and energy independence. It created Energy Ant, an agency mascot for kids' coloring books. It produced a series of "vulnerability" television ads that were so anti-Arab that they never appeared. It published a 24-page tabloid for teenagers, starring a character named Mod lecturing on energy, and spent $10,000 on an "energy conservation fashion show" at the Plaza Hotel in New York. It even mass-produced bumper stickers saying, "The Faster You Drive, the Richer They Get."

Although part of the FEA's message—that of lowered expectations and parsimony—is not in itself likely to make the agency popular, that message is always linked with dire prophecies of doom. The overall effect of the FEA's publications is not only to make it a household acronym, but to create the impression that what it does is absolutely essential to America's future. Once people think this, the role of members of Congress is easy. "It's political," says Rep. Patricia Schroeder of Colorado, who tried to abolish the FEA. "You go home to the district and somebody says, 'What are you doing about the energy crisis?' And you can say, 'Well, I voted to extend the FEA.' "

Not Terribly Bitter

Finally, a regulatory agency should of course stay on good terms with whomever it's regulating; the regulated industry must have a lot of power and influence, or it wouldn't have been regulated in the first place. It usually has a strong voice in the government. That's certainly the case with the oil industry, which the FEA regulates, and the relationship between the agency and the industry is,

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unsurprisingly, not terribly bitter.

Granted, some oil companies, especially the small ones, have been complaining about the amount of paperwork and bureaucratic fine tuning that compliance with the FEA's many regulations engenders. But at the same time, the FEA's major philosophical underpinning, energy independence, is completely congenial to the big oil companies—one has only to listen to the companies' commercials, or read their newspaper ads, to see that they paint the energy crisis in terms as dire as the FEA's.

The reason for this harmony is the FEA's policy of promoting domestic oil production as much as possible, and trying to lower American energy demand. The way to make people buy less gas is to make it more expensive, and the FEA wants to do that by taking away price controls on oil and letting prices drift up to their natural level. Obviously the oil companies would like to be able to raise their prices, so they are in full agreement with the FEA's policies. The agency is both chief regulator of oil and chief advocate of deregulation, and it and the industry are partners in protecting us from the great threat to the freedom of the American people. If the FEA's support of deregulation seems to be in conflict with its self-preservative instincts, its admirable use of the Corps of Engineers Corollary has gotten it almost completely out of that dilemma.

(It's worth noting that the FEA has had one consistent institutional enemy—the Office of Management and Budget, whose self-interest runs almost exactly counter to the FEA's and hence can't be given a piece of the action. The OMB looks good when it cuts back, and particularly in a year when the President has been talking up his opposition to big government the pressures are on it not to spend. It has been suspicious of the FEA's requests for budget increases, and—alone in the federal government—of the validity of the salt-dome theory of energy independence.)

The Silk Purse Syndrome

Even after the most careful sort of preparation, agencies have to be prepared to deal with attacks from anti-bureaucrats; when the attacks come, adept agencies can easily defuse them or even turn them around so as to strengthen their case for survival. It was practically inevitable that this sort of problem would come up for the FEA, since by the time it came up for renewal there was already a long litany of wasteful-bureaucracy complaints against it.

The FEA has the highest average salary of any federal agency ($19,026 a year). Its officials are big travelers. Its publicity operation is impressively large, its outside contracts generous. The agency has contracted out for things like the designing of an "executive development program" for its own staff, energy polls that said essentially the same things as Harris and Gallup, and a study on lighting conservation whose chief recommendation was "turning off lights when not in use." It was ripe for attack.

Attacked it was, but the attackers focused almost exclusively on the FEA's PR operation and ignored almost everything else. It was the 122 employees, the advertisements, and the Energy Ant program that most stuck in people's minds. When newspaper articles critical of the FEA were written, when congressmen got tough in hearings, it was over the issue of the PR department. The FEA thus wisely responded to the criticism that it was a wasteful bureaucracy by cutting the PR staff from 122 to 70 people. The cut was somewhat illusory, since it will be a while before it takes effect and since half of the cut positions are just being moved to other parts of the agency. But by responding flexibly to the charges against it, the FEA was able to get out of a potential mess with only about 25 losses. Since it is asking Congress for 700 more people and a budget increase from $142 million to $440 million in 1977, the loss should not be terribly painful. The key factor in cutting back is not num-

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bers or dollars, but strategy. (Similarly, the FEA more recently responded to criticism that it shouldn't be both making policy and, through data-gathering, evaluating that policy, not by dropping or giving away one of those functions, but by announcing an organizational reshuffling under which the conflict would allegedly disappear.)

There were other charges, more serious, that could be made against the FEA, but they were even easier to defuse. In fact, the agency has drawn a great deal of political advantage from the general worsening, since its creation, of the very problems it was supposed to remedy. It was supposed to slow the rate of increase in energy consumption, which has in fact quickened. It was supposed to reduce our dependence on Arab oil, but it has increased. It was supposed to keep our oil reserves up, but they have dwindled.

All this is not to say that the FEA was not sincerely trying to remedy those problems, but its lack of success, which could be used as an argument for its abolition, is instead the chief reason for its continued existence. In presenting its case the agency points frequently and ominously to the statistics of its own shortcomings. One FEA official, called upon to state succinctly why the agency should stay alive in the absence of an embargo, said, "Because we are increasing our dependence on the OPEC nations for oil." As the dependence increases, the FEA will become more and more necessary. This is the Central Paradox by which crisis- or problem-related agencies stay alive: they depend on a bad situation continuing to exist, and they are themselves the chief judge of how bad the situation really is. People outside of the agency, not being experts, can't understand how bad things really are.

Public Interest and Self-Interest

Which gets back to the embargo and energy crisis; the possibility of one and the continuing existence of the other are what the FEA depends on for its survival. Just as the army, when threatened, might talk about shutting down bases, or an embattled mayor might talk about laying off firemen, the FEA talks about energy independence and threats to our great democratic tradition. Unlike the army or the mayor, though, the FEA by issuing dire warnings about foreign powers is only doing its job. Perhaps the chief block to its abolition, and the abolition of other federal agencies, is that by working in what they sincerely believe is the public interest, agencies are usually working in their own self-interest as well. They tend to inflate the importance of the problem they are trying to solve, as would anyone spending all his time studying one problem.

Given that situation, the typical federal agency is likely to be practically impossible to tamper with. If most agencies are like the FEA, Congress, at least on the subcommittee level, is likely to be beholden to them structurally if not through direct favors. The laws authorizing agencies to do things are likely to multiply, not go away. They are likely to agree with the executive branch, and to share the perceptions of private industry. For the typical agency, all its potential perils are defused in advance, and even if there is a serious threat to its existence, in the course of doing its job the agency has probably amassed data showing just how essential it is, and that information can be trotted out before the public. Making sunset laws work entails more than just imposing specific tasks and specific deadlines, since, as the FEA's case graphically shows, those tasks and deadlines have a way of taking on more and more blurred contours as time goes on. It means cutting through an almost impenetrable web of overlapping self-interests that makes it very difficult for anyone in a position to change things to look dispassionately at what is really going on and to do something about it. ■

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The Foreign Policy Club: They've Been Wrong Before and They'll Be Wrong Again

by Roger Morris

Ask most politicians about welfare or farm subsidies or the intricate maneuvering on the latest tax bill, and they tend to answer with a natural self-confidence. If they aren't always right, they at least seem on comfortable ground, ready and able to apply independent judgment (and occasionally even common sense) to the personalities and politics at hand. But ask the same people about foreign policy and you are suddenly in a different realm, where eyes may glaze, voices lower to statesmanlike depths, and thoughts run to what Henry Kissinger knows that they don't.

At work, of course, is the mystique of foreign affairs, the curiously indestructible notion that our relations with the world are somehow too complex for ordinary folks, including otherwise shrewd politicians, to deal with. No nonsense has been more pernicious in recent American history. It explains much of the disaster in Vietnam and the similar abuses of power and secrecy elsewhere in foreign policy. Perhaps worst of all, the mystique has saddled Presidents with a self-contained, self-promoted establishment of foreign policy experts whose main expertise is in their own bureaucratic survival amid the debris of flawed and failed policies.

The shrunken sensibilities of the foreign policy elite helped destroy the last Democratic President. Now there are signs that it could all be happening again—this time to Jimmy Carter, who can't seem to figure out that foreign policy is not all that different from dealing with the Georgia highway department.

When Carter held court this summer in Plains, it was just like old times for many in the foreign policy club. Down from Washington and New York came the self-chosen few: men like Cyrus Vance, Paul Nitze, Paul Warnke, Zbigniew Brzezinski. Most Americans would not have recognized them—not yet, anyway. But in the sequestered world of lawyers and ambitious academics, bankers and foundation viceroys who have glided discreetly in and out of government to run foreign policy since World War II, their names were resonant of status and authority, and presumably of future high office in a Carter Administration. Spurned by Nixon, eclipsed by Kissinger, they had delicately jockeyed in exile until another President came along in thrall to their apparent indispensability. At last came the expected call from Jimmy Carter.

The ritual of the foreign policy

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briefing of the candidate makes everybody feel better. The nominee gets a cachet of big names to soothe his own assumed ignorance and anxieties (which, being their ultimate job insurance, the big names do as little as possible to dispel). The briefers get a splendid start on the run for jobs in the new regime. In cool, manly tones they talk about strategic arms and alliances and terms of trade. And the rest of the country, not least the nominee himself, may think they are really discussing how foreign policy works. The problem is that both the candidate and the country are still left with many of the same people and much the same mentality that have made our foreign policy the all-too-mysterious mess the next administration will inherit.

If Carter can see the foreign policy elite as the affable but slightly shady courthouse crowd it so resembles, if he can approach national security with the same irreverence and common sense he'd apply to cleaning up a mess in the highway department, he has a chance to beat the foreign policy system that ensnarled all of his Democratic predecessors since 1945 and ultimately destroyed the most recent one. If he doesn't see through the phony mystique, he could discover, as Lyndon Johnson did, that no popular majority or domestic achievements can save him from the consequences of letting the foreign policy club run its own show.

Like good old boys clustered around a courthouse square, the foreign policy establishment exerts a natural gravity on the new politician in town. Its members talk, after all, with an easy familiarity and authority about well-remembered events and figures. They have been there before, deputy secretaries and special assistants in the exotic places and acronymed agencies.

There is the pull, too, of their social prestige. These are men who are well connected and well turned out, and their appeal is great to both insiders who are their kind of people and outsiders who are bothered that they aren't. To be impressive as an elite group, of course, the foreign policy establishment has to *function* as one, and that it does quite well. It is mostly made up of middle-aged white men, but it is suitably sprinkled with younger proteges in the same mold, and even a black or a woman here and there. These men are public spirited and don't forget to invite up-and-coming local leaders to attend their conferences and sit on their commissions. And they know how to arrange for the struggling presidential candidate a small, discreet Washington dinner party to show their interest, even though it's still early in the primaries, before anyone need commit himself publicly; they did just that for Jimmy Carter.

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The Sullied Record

It is without question an impressive group, one that includes gifted and serious men. But around Washington, no less than any county or state, a crowd of ready-made advisors has a history to go with its fancy titles and status.

Much of the experience that is supposed to be the group's selling point turns out to be a record of questionable judgment in many cases, some downright failures, and consistently shifty politics to escape responsibility for the mess it created. Cyrus Vance, reportedly the leading candidate for Secretary of State in a Carter administration, was Deputy Secretary of Defense under Robert McNamara from 1964 to 1967 and a major participant in, and apologist for, many of the most disastrous and deceptive decisions of the Vietnam war. From the Gulf of Tonkin through the hidden plans for escalation to the costly myopia before Tet, Vance was one of the handful of men making policy. In addition to Vietnam, he was heavily involved in the Dominican Republic intervention and in the early promotion of the Pentagon arms trade, a scandal that Carter himself now deplores. That is only a sampling of the shadows in Vance's past, and he is only the most conspicuous of the group.

Another imposing briefer in Plains was Paul Nitze, now gray and distinguished, who in his younger years was a steady advocate of the war as a Pentagon official. Later, under Nixon, he stayed on as a SALT negotiator to champion hardsite installations for the U. S. missile force, a dubious precedent for the first-strike nuclear strategy Carter now disavows. Even one of the liberal favorites in the club, Washington lawyer Paul Warnke, who is widely touted as the next Secretary of Defense, has his share of embarrassing skeletons. Several journalistic accounts of the closing Johnson years have praised Warnke for his relative opposition to the war policy as an assistant secretary of Defense. But *The Pentagon Papers* documents a Warnke dissent so tame and bureaucratically cautious as to be insignificant. In the end, he helped draft the famous post-Tet Pentagon memo to LBJ (described in the final chapter of *The Pentagon Papers*) that actually recommended more troops and bombing without any reference to peace negotiations—all at a time when Eugene McCarthy, the voters of New Hampshire, and millions of other Americans saw rather more clearly the national interest.

The Real Mystery

But more disturbing than any of the past sins of men like Vance or Nitze (and the list could go on with other names) is that all of their records, bad policy and good, remain shrouded not only in official secrecy, but in a covenant of silence among the establishment. Some of the foreign policy elite were at the very center of one of the most divisive and scarring chapters in the history of the nation. All witnessed the fall of LBJ and the loss of a large part of public trust in the conduct of foreign affairs. Yet for all that national trauma, not one of these men has come forward with the candid story of what happened to us, and why. There have been no articles or speeches or testimony telling us that they now understand what was wrong with their old policies, though they often appear in *The New York Times* or on Capitol Hill. Nor, for that matter, do we know much about their current views. To the plain and vital questions of foreign policy—the balance between detente and security, covert intervention, the power of multinational corporations, the arms trade, the control of our own bureaucratic monsters in Washington, and on and on—there is just no direct response in the careful, vacuous prose of the establishment's writings. If indeed there is any mystery in national security, it is what any of these men really know or believe as Carter pre-

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pares to hand over power to them. It's as if all the country roads had buckled and the bridges had collapsed: the clerks and the contractors responsible aren't talking about what happened or how to fix it, and we're about to hire them again for some major highway projects.

This public furtiveness of the elite goes to the heart of who and what they are. Of the 23 names on the Carter foreign and defense policy task force, all but a token few belong to the same tiny, incestuous world—Brookings, the magazines *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*, the foundations, the investment and law firms—it is a seamless web in which perhaps a hundred people circulate, talking to each other, reading each other's articles (as much, one suspects, to keep track of rivals as to learn), promoting each other, and of course positioning themselves for calls from the Jimmy Carters. Theirs is a life lived mainly in carpeted offices and quiet boardrooms, well insulated from the rest of the country. An elite presumably sophisticated and worldly is, in fact, completely isolated and provincial.

It is hard to gauge the worst results of that isolation. Because its members talk largely to themselves, the foreign policy establishment is almost entirely without a fresh or original idea. Theirs is precisely the kind of ingrown mentality in which the myths of Vietnam survived for so long despite the stark reality. The war is gone, but the sterile intellectual quality of the establishment that fed it is still there. Things are unlikely to change, in fact, precisely because the club's remoteness and secrecy are what have traditionally kept it in power. It's no surprise that the people on Carter's foreign policy task force aren't talking openly about their views; that could only hurt.

The Carter task forces have been selected very much as the elite would staff a new administration, through the discreet recommendation of patrons and proteges. The predictable outcome is a homogenized set of views in men certifiably "sound," that most valued of establishment cliches. Though the vast majority of the elite served in the key foreign policy jobs over the past 15 years, only one of the Carter advisors has the distinction of having resigned over policy—Anthony Lake, who left the Kissinger National Security Council staff on the eve of the Cambodian invasion. The club's usual punishment for "going public" in resignation is to take the offender off the rolls—no more calls, no more government offices. Lake has managed to survive with the patronage of Warnke and others, but one wonders if it will ever be quite the same. Nowadays his peers speak glowingly of Lake's "decency," but when gossip matches names to jobs Tony Lake is put in AID, or perhaps something nice in human rights.

A Narrow World

All this contributes to the ultimate political irresponsibility of the foreign policy elite. At best wary of public debate, at worst contemptuous of a country from which its members are physically and intellectually isolated, it is truly unaccountable. The pressures in its world are not from public opinion or congressional debate, but from the gentlemanly cooptation that lubricates the establishment's dealings both in and out of government. Those daily pressures raise the most serious questions about the ability of such men to run American foreign policy without a chronic conflict of interest.

It is not that men like Warnke and Vance are not intelligent and knowledgeable, because they are; it is that their experience has been so confined to the narrowest of possible worlds—a constantly self-reducing group of similarly intelligent and informed and like-minded people—that they never take seriously the broad range of opinion. They are used to hearing the same kinds of things over and over,

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from the people they respect most—and even though they would in principle abhor close-mindedness, close-minded is what they become. It's doubtful that members of the establishment would consciously try to favor some special interest—but if your friends are all Wall Street lawyers, it's hard to think thoughts that Wall Street lawyers don't think.

The result of the establishment's return will be a return to the bureaucratic anarchy in Washington that Henry Kissinger has suppressed. The paralysis of the Johnson Administration in all the areas Kissinger unlocked so dramatically—SALT, the Middle East, China, Southern Africa, international economics—was no accident. It was the inevitable result of the style and substance of the Democratic elite, which behaved, after all, a lot like bureaucrats everywhere behave—in a way that makes purpose get lost in a morass of procedure.

Carter will find at the State Department a career service that makes featherbedding in the Georgia government look mild. The efficiency and morale of our diplomacy—as the late ambassador Ellis Briggs discovered when the Czechs expelled half his mission in the late 40s—usually increases in direct proportion to personnel cuts. In the CIA, another of many possible examples, the African intelligence branch vastly improved its output when all its stations were reduced because of demands elsewhere to one-man posts.

The moral of these stories for the incoming Carter regime is that much of our foreign policy is conducted in the same way and for the same reasons as plain old state politics; all government tends to go on doing what it is designed to do, whether it is dispensing welfare checks or building highways, largely because it is there. If a new President expects to reform foreign policy and control its abuses, he will have to treat the foreign affairs bureaucracies with the heavy hand he would apply to any other wasteful agency.

He should understand, too, that a major problem with these better-paid and better-educated bureaucrats is the same sort of conflict of interest one might run up against in Atlanta or Sacramento. When a foreign service officer is expected to find human rights outrages or mishandling of aid money in a client regime on whose favor he relies for his own status and performance, it's like entrusting mass transit funds to the highway lobby. Seen for what they are—a parochial, pension-husbanding bureaucracy pretty much like any other, with career and institutional interests more influential than any policy from the top—the foreign affairs agencies can be given the jobs they do best, and spared the responsibilities they only mock.

A Way Out

A new President will not find any of this easy to do. Both the foreign service and the CIA have long-cultivated friends in the Washington press and the Congress who will almost certainly oppose personnel cuts or new agencies. It is, after all, the same story with the vested interests in Atlanta. Those are the realities of foreign policy, as much as summit meetings and lofty speeches.

The way out of the old trap is there, if Carter wants to take it. He can pause to reflect on how much he already knows about the government he will inherit in Washington. And he can take the time to find new and fresh people to manage his foreign policy in place of the worn and self-serving establishment.

Here, however, is where it gets tricky. It's obviously a waste to send the foreign policy club packing in its entirety; men like Warnke have a sheer competence that it would be a shame to lose. It's far worse not to hire new people at all, to put the old destructive premium on expertise. And even with the proper balance, there's a further, equally important problem of attitudes.

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Back in May, an Evans and Novak column quoted Carter worrying over the composition of his foreign policy task force; he was particularly worried about Tony Lake, who was fixed in Carter's mind as "the one who quit Kissinger."

It is this mindless distrust of employee disloyalty—admittedly just a faint glimmer in Carter at this point—that lies at the root of so many mistakes in foreign policy and the rest of government. If the boss doesn't want criticism, recoils in horror at people who quit over honest disagreements, he ends up with an officialdom whose primary goal is not ruffling that particular feather. And as soon as bureaucrats end up worrying about staying on their bosses' good side at any cost, they end up forming enclosed, self-protective, unproductive cliques like the one that ran our foreign affairs in the sixties. The worst trait of bureaucrats is their primary instinct toward self-preservation, and its worst specific manifestation is in telling the boss only what he wants to hear.

Speaking Their Minds

It's impossible to wipe out the self-preservative urge completely, but there is a way to avoid the disastrous unanimity and stagnation of opinion that springs from it: by genuinely encouraging people in the government to speak their minds. Government employees should be loyal to their bosses, but only when the bosses are loyal to principle and the public interest. The idea that loyalty extends to all situations is a perilous one. Carter ought to make it clear to his foreign policy advisors that they are working for something far bigger than Jimmy Carter and his administration, and that they should not hesitate to criticize, even quit, if they think he is wrong, if they think in some important way he's not being true to his best self. He needs people who will always believe in what they are doing, and that necessarily means people who are free to dissent, to ask him "why not the best?"

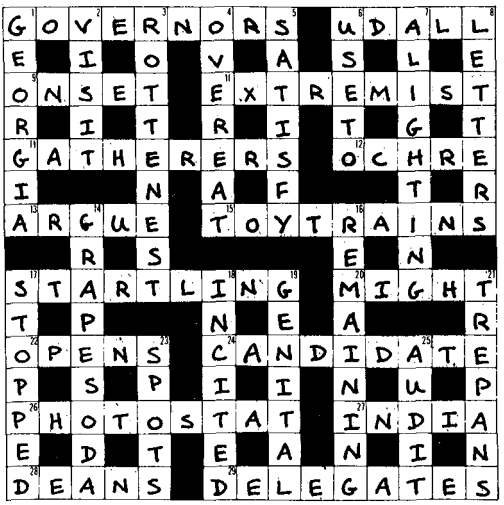
Presidents Johnson and Nixon only encouraged the worst qualities of the foreign policy establishment by making it plain that there was no freedom to dissent. As a result of that climate, the ethic of staying around at any cost—and the subsidiary ethic of conning the boss into thinking you have an indispensible expertise—took over, and the vestiges of idealism shriveled and died.

What is most wrong about the briefers in Plains is that they have long since ceased to believe in anything but themselves. Ironically, the best answer to that problem, and to much of the foreign policy malaise, came from one of the elder statesmen of the establishment, Henry Stimson. It could well be saving advice to a Carter presidency. "Mr. Secretary," a questioner once asked Stimson, "how on earth can we ever bring peace to the world?" The old man reportedly answered without hesitation, "You begin by bringing to Washington a small handful of able men who believe that the achievement of peace is possible.

"You work them to the bone until they no longer believe that it's possible.

"Then you throw them out, and bring in a new bunch who do believe it's possible." ■

Answers to last month's puzzle.



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The Final Days of the Third Reich As Told To Woodward and Bernstein

by Arthur Levine

Following the critical and commercial success of our book *The Final Days*, our publishers have prevailed on us to bring out a new edition of our early work on Adolf Hitler's downfall, first published in 1947. Here, in embryo form, are the journalistic techniques that were later brought to fruition in *The Final Days*. Our ability to penetrate the innermost workings of the Third Reich should provide valuable insights for those interested in our methodology.

In the course of reconstructing events, we interviewed 586 Nazis and checked every detail with at least two sources. We divided this massive undertaking into several areas of inquiry, including:

Adolf Hitler
the Reichschancellery staff
the SS
the Gestapo
the Propaganda Ministry
the Luftwaffe
the Nazi Party
Hitler's personal physicians
the public record—statements by Nazi leaders, newspaper articles, memoirs, and official documents of the Third Reich.

From these and other areas of inquiry, we drew up a list of several hundred persons to be interviewed. Some spent many hours with us, and volunteered information freely. Several of the principals met with each other to refresh their memories on these important events. Many supplied us with notes, memos, letters, and diaries, which were of immeasurable benefit. We made it clear that we would check all facts with other participants.

All interviewees were assured that their identities would remain forever secret. We vowed to go to our graves with the names of our sources locked within our hearts. Without this rigid security, we would never have been able to get an honest picture of the last days of the Third Reich. Traditional history, with its cumbersome reliance on footnotes and attributed statements, is too often marred by the desire by participants to "sanitize" the record for posterity. We have avoided those pitfalls here. The results speak for themselves.

Bob Woodward
Carl Bernstein

Arthur Levine is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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THIS WAS an extraordinary mission. Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering and Heinrich Himmler, the Gestapo chief, settled in for the two-hour train trip to Berchtesgaden. The two sensitive and brilliant aides were leaving behind a hot, sunny Munich. It was September 15, 1943. Ahead of them lay the mountains and lakes of western Germany and Austria. The sun poured in at a 47-degree angle through the windows. For most of the travelers, the trip was an occasion for relaxation, a brief respite from the war. Yet these two public servants were not in a holiday mood.

Goering and Himmler had heard rumors that the Fuhrer was anti-Semitic. It was all hearsay, innuendo, but, still, the two men were troubled.

They had reached an inescapable conclusion: they must go to Berchtesgaden, confront the Fuhrer with these allegations, and ask him to put all doubts to rest.

As the train moved through western Germany, the amiable, flamboyant Goering mused about his own attitudes towards the Jewish people. He tapped his engraved swastika ring

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on the armrest as he recalled his lifelong admiration for the Jews.

A plump, avuncular man with a fondness for expensive paintings, Goering had many Jewish friends from his days as a World War I air force hero. He kept up his contacts after he joined the National Socialist German Worker's Party ("Nazis") in the 1920s. The Jews, Goering thought, were bright, hard-working, patriotic.

Goering was well equipped to judge the finer qualities of man. As President of the Reichstag, then as Air Minister and founder of the Gestapo, Goering had impressed associates with his willingness to work long hours and his insider's knowledge of the bureaucracy. He was tough, shrewd, and loyal. Goering was an aesthete and an elegant dresser. With his lacquered fingernails and green velvet capes, he cut an impressive figure at the Reichschancellery.

As the pastoral scene outside sped by their windows, Himmler and Goering were in a reflective mood. "You know, Heinrich," Goering said, twirling his three-foot gold baton, "lately, I sure miss having my close Jewish friends around to talk to. There used to be so many of them, and now I can't seem to get them on the phone any more. Where have they gone?"

"Beats me, Hermann," Himmler answered. He tugged absent-mindedly on his lapels with their provocative death's-head insignia.

A fly hovered two inches above the window sill. Goering moved over to crush it, but Himmler reached out instinctively to grab his hand. "Don't do that, Hermann!" Himmler exclaimed. "All life is sacred, down to the lowliest animal in God's creation."

The two men lapsed into silence for 72 seconds. Finally, Goering asked, "Have you heard anything about these so-called concentration camps?"

Not really, Himmler said. Rumors here and there, but nothing solid, no firm evidence. They must ask the Fuhrer about them.

Yes, Goering said, that was a good idea.

The train pulled into the Berchtesgaden station at 5:22 p. m., sending clouds of steam 18 feet into the air. The two men got off the train and looked for their chauffeured automobiles, which would take them to the Berghof, the Fuhrer's mountain retreat. They were nervous and tense as they contemplated their upcoming meeting with Adolf Hitler.

WHEN THEY arrived at the chalet, the two men were led through a living room that was 60 feet long and 50 feet wide, with Italian paintings and Gobelin tapestries hanging on the walls. The soft-spoken Martin Bormann, often called the conscience of the Reichschancellery, greeted them in the anteroom outside Hitler's office. He was reading a travel guide to Argentina when they came in.

"I'm so glad you could come here," Bormann said, adjusting his argyle socks. The Fuhrer, Bormann said, had been withdrawn and uncommunicative, making decisions in isolation. He had been in this mood for at least five years, maybe more.

Bormann felt he didn't really know the Fuhrer. His decisions were unpredictable: one day, silence, the next day, they invaded Russia. It was eerie.

Goering and Himmler were finally led into Hitler's office. The Fuhrer was seated at his desk, drinking a Lowenbrau. He looked pale and exhausted. He had not been sleeping well. He had been troubled by the defeat at Stalingrad, the Allied landing in Italy, the fall of Africa. Events were closing in on him.

They exchanged brief pleasantries. Churchill was an "asshole," Mussolini "that fat wop." Hitler rambled on about nothing, making little sense.

Then they got to the point. There had been some talk that the Fuhrer was anti-Semitic. They themselves didn't believe the charges, they made clear, but it was important for the sake of the country that Hitler lay the

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rumors to rest. The image of anti-Semitism was hampering foreign policy. Himmler and Goering finally wanted to get ahead of the problem, meet the current charges, anticipate future ones, answer them all.

Had Hitler played any role in mistreating Jews?

Absolutely not, Hitler said.

"Excuse me for a moment," the Fuhrer said, picking up a bright red phone on his desk. "Hello, Ilse? Bormann tells me what a good job you've been doing. The way you've handled it has been very skillful."

Hitler turned back to face his confused assistants. "You know," he remarked, "Hess just didn't have his head screwed on right."

"The Jews, Mein Fuhrer, what's happened to all the Jews?" Goering asked. "There used to be so many of them."

"I'm dying to find out," Hitler said, winking broadly. "Get it?" He collapsed with laughter, then composed himself.

Himmler was skeptical, but he didn't press the point with Hitler.

The Fuhrer glanced at a picture of his dog, Blondi. "Of course, we could lean on the Poles, too," he added. He paused for a long moment. "But it would be wrong."

Himmler and Goering were beset with fresh doubts. But they were committed to serve, and they would do their best. The biggest problem here, Goering thought, is credibility. The Fuhrer's team could pull through, but it would not be easy.

Himmler was disturbed. The Fuhrer was not being very cooperative in dispelling any lingering doubts. Finally, he asked point-blank: "Mein Fuhrer, what are your true feelings about the Jewish people?"

Hitler exploded. "I don't give a shit how you do it, just get rid of them. That's the plan."

The two men greeted these remarks with a disappointed silence. There was not much room for maneuvering here. It could be a problem. They kept their concerns to themselves, however. They did not wish to add to the Fuhrer's burdens. Standing up to leave, Himmler said, "Thanks for giving us fresh insights into your views on the Jewish people." The three men shook hands, and Himmler and Goering simultaneously realized how little they really knew the Fuhrer, even after all these years.

Privately, the two men were troubled by the meeting. They walked quickly down the hall and strode 29 yards into an empty office. They sat across from each other in two leather chairs, and sorted out their feelings. The two Nazi leaders realized that the Fuhrer was probably thinking out loud—trying out outrageous alternatives as a way of reaching decisions. It was part of the process. They had heard him do it before.

Himmler noted that all people, even dictators, said things they don't mean. "Which one of us is without sin?" Himmler asked. Goering nodded solemnly. Furthermore, Himmler added, the Fuhrer's approach to the Jewish question had to be understood in the context of Hitler's global plans for the security of the Third Reich. Nothing was black and white, he said. The two men nodded in agreement.

They would stand by the Fuhrer.

Drawing on their reserves of inner strength, they summoned up the courage to walk out of the office with big smiles on their faces. The foreign press still had questions, they learned. Goebbels would relay their answers. Was the Fuhrer an anti-Semite? No, Himmler said, Hitler was not an anti-Semite. "The problem is behind us," Goering added. "We're definitely out of the woods."

THE RUSSIAN troops had reached the outskirts of Berlin. It was April 21, 1945. The skies were overcast. Goering and Himmler met secretly in the fashionable conference room of the Reichschancellery bunker. They had just learned of a signed memo linking Hitler to concentration camps.

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"We've found the smoking Luger," Himmler told Goering, his voice calm and emotionless. "It's the ball game." No anti-Semite should continue to lead the German people, they agreed.

Himmler and Goering were shocked by the new evidence. For years, they had faithfully served Hitler, never once imagining that he was capable of such depravity. They had pledged their lives to him, and he had betrayed them. More in sorrow than in anger, they decided that Himmler should arrange to meet the Fuhrer one last time.

Hitler seemed preoccupied. He was sitting on a brown leather couch in a small 12-by-9-foot room with a gun pointed at his head. Now and then there were the occasional dulled reverberations of artillery shells overhead.

Himmler looked at the pathetic figure before him with a mixture of loathing and contempt. He had always despised anti-Semites, and although he had never personally met any, he had heard that they were without a smattering of human decency. It was, he realized now, all too true.

Yet now Hitler acted as if he were reaching out to Himmler for forgiveness, some sign of absolution. Himmler was reminded once again of the enormous distance between them. "I'm sorry I didn't tell you about the concentration camps, Heinrich," Hitler said, tears coming to his eyes. "I know that you are completely innocent and I only hope that you have an opportunity to vindicate yourself in a court of law, or, failing that, in any contemporary histories produced by journalists after my downfall." He lowered his eyes. "Will you ever forgive me?" he pleaded.

"I accept your apologies, Mein Fuhrer," Himmler responded. He thought to himself that the world will never know the full truth. "Himmler the monster," the Allies would probably call him. It was a shame, but he would bear up under the burden. He had wanted a Third Reich devoted to civil liberties and racial equality, but his efforts apparently had had no impact on Hitler's policies. Now he would be called a war criminal by close-minded critics. He sighed with stoic resignation.

Suddenly, Himmler flashed with anger. "How could you lie to us all these years? You *know* how strongly I feel about religious freedom and the sacredness of human life!"

Hitler shrugged. "It was something I had to do if I were to trick good people like yourself into devoting themselves to the national interest," Hitler said, glancing at his Timex. "If you knew my real thoughts about the Jewish people, I'm sure you would have left the country in the 1930s."

"You're damn right, Hitler," he shot back. "And I would have joined the Allies and brought you to justice, too."

Himmler got up to leave. "I'm going to convert to Judaism the first chance I get, as a small symbol of atonement for your immoral atrocities, which you implemented without my knowledge."

Then he walked out, never once looking back at his nation's leader.

The end was near, he realized, and as he strolled along the corridors he pondered his own role. He was, perhaps, not without guilt. He had made prolonged concealment possible. He had unwittingly helped keep things going. Of course, he had been careful not to participate. He might tell himself that he hadn't known what was going on. But there had been hints and signs everywhere, all along the way. He should have known, goddammit. He hit his fists together in exasperation.

Still, he hadn't known of any specific piece of evidence. Until they uncovered the death-camp memo. There it was, in black and white. Proof. The gossips in the Reichschancellery had been asking the same question for over two years: What did the Fuhrer know and when did he know it?

Now Himmler knew. Somehow, it didn't make him feel much better. He went to his office to write a letter of resignation on a yellow legal pad. ■

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Maybe We Should Help Pan Am

by George Hopkins

Pan American World Airways, once among the most prestigious of U. S. corporations, its blue chip status symbolized perfectly by the elegant blue disc of the world painted on its Boeings, is today a virtual welfare case. Pan Am has petitioned the government for a monthly subsidy (and been rejected); it has begged the Shah of Iran for help (he has refused); and it has accepted charity from its own employees in the form of remitted wage increases (despite the humiliating welshing on company contractual obligations that such charity implies). Like a migrant farm worker following the harvest, Pan Am limps from summer to summer, praying for new tourists while fending off its anxious creditors, desperately juggling the books on its crushing burden of debt. Pan Am hasn't made a profit in this decade.

If Pan Am survives its current agony, which is a composite of high fuel prices, the recession-related slump in international tourism, and excess capacity, it will owe a great deal to its employees. Pan Am's pilots, for example, have agreed to an unprecedented 11-percent cut in pay. On its face this reduction in wages may not sound like much, but with a pilot payroll of $100 million annually, it amounts to a hefty $10 million net gain in Pan Am's critical cash flow squeeze—enough to sustain the airline's operations for nearly a month during the next year. Even more important, the unionized pilots' attempt to rescue their employer may indicate a significant change in today's climate of automatic distrust of corporations.

How did Pan Am get in such a jam? Almost from the time in 1927 when an ambitious, well-connected young Princetonian named Juan D. Trippe created the airline in order to take advantage of a new law permitting subsidized airmail service to Latin America, Pan Am has been something of a government agency. Whether acting as the State Department's surrogate in remote cities, or flying American servicemen to holidays in Bangkok or Honolulu for a dollar plus costs, Pan Am became over the years closely identified with the American flag. Because government favor can be fickle, such commercial relationships are seldom comfortable—the power to sustain is also the power to destroy. But Pan Am has generally fared well since its maiden flight on October 19, 1927, which ferried 30,000 letters

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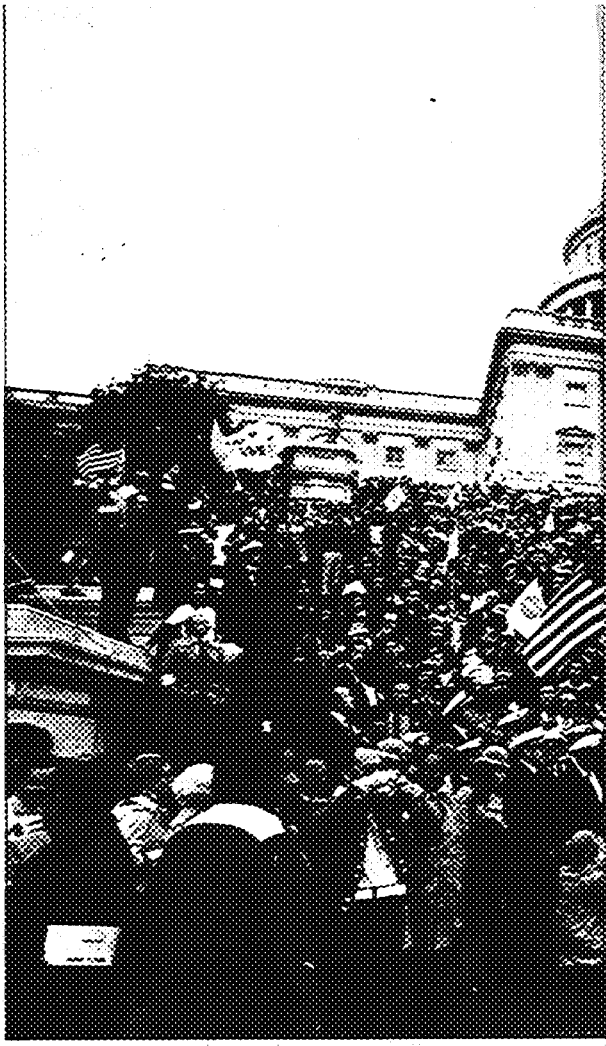
from Key West to Havana in a single-engine Fairchild seaplane. Trippe's financial backers, including wealthy classmates like Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and pillars of the eastern establishment with names like Rockefeller and Harriman, found him a charming and persuasive practitioner of the political arts, and the doors their influence opened to him in Washington were seldom closed afterward. Despite the debacle of American capitalism after 1929 and the onset of Roosevelt's New Deal, Trippe serenely maneuvered Pan American ahead, conquering Latin America, opening the first trans-Pacific seaplane service in 1935, and pioneering regular North Atlantic crossings by 1939. Indeed, of all the young men attempting to adapt the new aviation technology to commerce, seeking consciously to extend to the skies the ethos of pioneering bequeathed by an earlier generation of railroad magnates like Harriman and Hill, only Trippe survived the 1920s intact. Surrounding himself with experts like Charles A. Lindbergh, Trippe bestrode commercial aviation like a giant for the next four decades, weathering every crisis from the "Lindbergh Boom" on the stock market following the 1927 flight to Paris* to the introduction of continent-spanning jets.

Welcome to Hard Times

But now Juan Trippe has gone into retirement; Lindbergh is dead. In 1969, after a brief interval under Harold Gray, one of Pan Am's pioneer pilots turned executive, Najeeb Halaby assumed control of the airline—and it hasn't made a profit since. Halaby made crucial mistakes, it appears in retrospect, because he had just the qualities Trippe admired. As a



hard-driving administrator of the Federal Aviation Agency Halaby became, during the Kennedy Administration, the most outspoken advocate of technical innovation in aviation and a vociferous supporter of an American supersonic transport to compete with the Anglo-French Concorde. But it was not the ill-fated SST that caused Halaby's trouble so much as his collateral enthusiasm for the first of the wide-bodied jumbo jets.

In keeping with his long-standing policy of technical leadership, Trippe had committed Pan Am to being the first airline to purchase the 747. Calling it "the most exciting decision" of his career, Trippe declared that the new superplane would serve the 1970s much as the Boeing 707 had served the 1960s, as a "carrier for the great mass of people." Pan Am inaugurated trans-Atlantic 747 service in January 1970, and it became Halaby's

*Which saw supposedly hard-headed businessmen and investors respond to the visionary lure of commercial aviation and the magic of Lindbergh's flight by investing some $550 million in aviation ventures, most of them shaky to begin with and virtually all of them wiped out after 1929.

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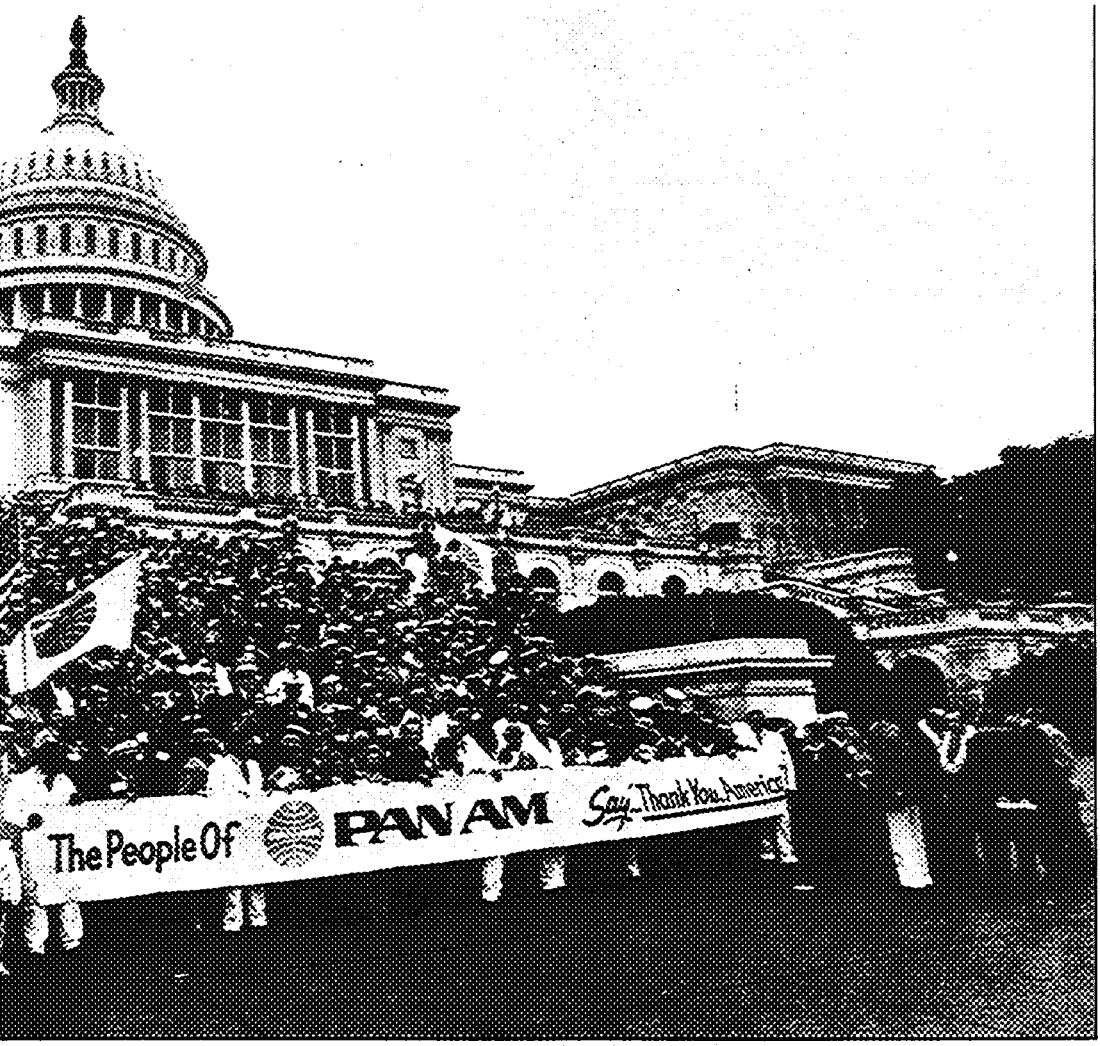

task to keep the massive 350-seat plane filled with passengers. Halaby's critics contend that Pan Am's slide toward disaster was caused not so much by Trippe's original decision to order the 747 as by Halaby's failure to recognize the proper *number* of them to order.

Past experience seemed to show that any new technology that brought economies of scale into air travel would earn automatic profits. Airlines that had been slow to order enough new 707s found themselves waiting years for manufacturers to complete their backlogs. Meanwhile Pan Am, which had ordered plenty, roared into the mid-1960s on an unprecedented wave of prosperity. In 1966 alone, Pan Am's 140-seat 707s earned it nearly $72 million and brought it an astounding 24-percent increase in passengers over the previous year. Things slowed down a bit in 1967 and 1968, but the airline still earned a respectable $110 million over the two years. Trippe, and later Halaby, could thus argue with some justification that the problem seemed to be one of too little capacity, rather than too much. A bigger airplane with more seats was a vital necessity if Pan Am were to maintain its leadership and accommodate the boom in overseas tourism that experts predicted for the 1970s.

Alas for Halaby and Pan Am, the proper interpretation of this lesson of history turned out to be very tricky. The Boeing 747 offered no real advance in technology; it was merely a larger version of the 707,* and its

*Historically, every successful commercial transport has been faster, larger, and more efficient than its predecessors. The American SST (like the Anglo-French Concorde), was neither larger nor more efficient than the previous generation of transports—it was merely faster. Knowledgeable observers predicted that the SST would be a costly fiasco

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profitability depended on a steady increase in passengers that never materialized. If all things had remained equal, if the economy had not gone sour, if fuel prices had not soared, then Pan Am would not today be on its knees. There is nothing wrong with the airplane, as Robert Oppenlader, senior vice-president of Delta Airlines (a highly respected marketer) said recently when announcing that Delta was getting rid of its 747s. "Our passengers and most everybody's like to ride the 747," he admitted. "It just so happens that it's too big."

The 747, as it turned out, was also too big for Pan Am. The airline sustained a moderate but not alarming loss in 1969, but in 1970, the first full year of 747 service, it lost a devastating $48 million. Pan Am's 1971 losses of $46 million were only slightly better than the 1970 disaster, and the 1972 losses of $28 million, although representing some progress, were not enough to save Halaby, who was fired. Owing to the ruthless cost-cutting of William T. Seawell, a hard-nosed former Air Force General who replaced Halaby, Pan Am's losses shrank to only $12 million in 1973, and a profit seemed possible for 1974. Then fuel prices skyrocketed, the recession hit, and amidst predictions of a horrendous $85 million loss, Seawell turned to the government for help.

Hat in Hand

Most Americans do not realize that the law permits U. S. airlines to request direct subsidies if they fail to make a profit. Pan Am's announcement in May 1974 that it wanted $10 million a month, a portion of which would have been for "fair profit on investment," raised howls of protest. Russell Baker asked, "How come it's a subsidy when Pan American asks for $100 million to keep flying, but when people ask for considerably less to keep going, it is a federal handout?"

Arch-conservatives like John Tower and Barry Goldwater led the fight to rescue Lockheed through a bailout that was, in essence, exactly the kind of WPA "leaf-raking" project they used to denounce when it served the unemployed working stiff. Enough liberals supported the Lockheed loan to pass it, but they muttered that jobs or no jobs, defense contractors had better clean up their act. Pan Am was no defense contractor, but it had the misfortune to come along, hat in hand, asking for a traditional subsidy that was, in fact, virtually promised it by law, at just the time when the bitter taste in liberal mouths was strongest.

Senator William Proxmire blasted the request as a "clear distortion of the free enterprise system" that would, if the Ford Administration granted it, "signal every distressed company in the country that the federal government will take the risk out of business."

But the fact is that the airline business has not really been part of the free enterprise system since Calvin Coolidge's day. After the first great rush of enthusiasm for commercial aviation foundered on the inadequate technology of the 1920s, canny operators like Trippe realized that only through the hidden subsidy of airmail payments would there be any profit in flying. Accordingly, through a series of laws, beginning with the Kelly Air Mail Act of 1925, continuing with the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938, and culminating in the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, the airline industry managed to substitute the concept of "controlled competition under government regulation" for laissez-faire.

long before the project collapsed, largely because aviation history is littered with failed airliners that were merely faster than their competition. The Boeing 747 and the other jumbos, however, should have been superior on at least two of the three factors, which has usually been sufficient for success. While the jumbos are no faster than the 707, they are much more efficient on the "seat-mile" (cost of flying one seat one mile) basis that airlines use to compute expenses. But the 747's cost-efficiency depends on large passenger loads.

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Through its power to issue certificates permitting airlines to fly between certain cities, the Civil Aeronautics Board tried to create an integrated system of air transportation. By carefully controlling route awards, the CAB hoped to apportion business between the airlines so they could remain under private management's domain. By surrendering control over routes and fares, the airlines gained the explicit promise of government subsidy should the CAB's market management result in financial loss. The CAB's success or failure in creating a workable national air transportation network became a subject of vital concern once intercity rail service began to collapse after World War II, leaving the airlines as the only practical way to travel.

Spreading the Wealth

Despite the uproar over Pan Am's subsidy request, it has been national policy for over a generation to subsidize air operations over commercially weak routes. Indeed, in 1973, Texas International Airlines received $560,000 from the government to subsidize flights to remote cities like Harlingen, McAllen, and Brownsville.

This form of indirect CAB subsidy works to the airlines' advantage inside the U.S., but internationally it has worked to Pan Am's disadvantage. The method by which small airlines like Texas International (and Braniff) got the "international" added to their names illustrates the point. Prior to World War II Pan Am enjoyed a virtual monopoly in overseas flying, and it tried to maintain that position after the war by having the CAB designate it America's "chosen instrument" internationally—i.e., our national overseas airline. But Pan Am was already so successful, and the future of international air travel looked so bright owing to the development during the war of ocean-spanning, four-engine transports like the DC-4, that the CAB balked. Instead, it opened up Pan Am's previously protected international preserves to the competition of airlines like Northwest (which added "Orient" to its name), Transcontinental and Western Air (which saved a lot of money on paint jobs by salvaging its initials and becoming Trans World Airlines), and Braniff. The theory was that by giving domestic airlines access to some of Pan Am's highly profitable international routes, they would make a bundle of money and thus be able to expand their service on unprofitable domestic routes. Despite the bite this competition took out of Pan Am's profits, it remained the world's most successful airline throughout most of the years since 1945, although as recently as the late 1950s it received occasional subsidy help from the CAB.

Pan Am thus occupies a unique and lonely position. It has no domestic routes that lie within the CAB's route-granting and fare-setting authority. In other words, Pan Am must compete with other U. S. airlines internationally, but it is forbidden to compete with them inside the comfortably regulated U. S.

Pan Am survived the dangers inherent in this exposed position for a long time, largely because of two international organizations that duplicate, albeit imperfectly, the regulatory functions of the CAB. The first of these is the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a technical arm of the UN whose chief concern has been aircraft specifications, pilot qualifications, safety standards, and the like. But in recent years, the ICAO has begun to decay as a technical regulatory agency, largely because of politics. Like the UN, the ICAO operates on the "one nation one vote" principle, and the bloc-voting habits of Arab and African states have seriously undermined its effectiveness. For example, the ICAO recently granted "observer" status to Yassir Arafat's PLO—a great irony in view of the PLO's penchant for skyjacking.

But the ICAO is less important than the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which occupies a

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position roughly analogous to that of the CAB—with the startling exception that it is the creature not of government, but of the airline operators themselves. The IATA is an international cartel, devoted to the principle of controlled air fares through voluntary agreements ratified by the governments of the airlines concerned, and therefore has a quasi-diplomatic status. In short, the IATA tries to keep air fares sufficiently high so that all the international airlines make a profit.

The problem with this approach is that it penalizes Pan Am, which is one of the few privately owned international airlines and has historically been the most technologically advanced. It is in the best position to offer high-quality service at the lowest price. Many foreign "flag" airlines (the "chosen instruments" of their countries) are remarkably inefficient creatures of national pride operating at huge deficits. Every emerging third-world airline immediately demands admission to the lucrative North Atlantic run where, by virtue of the fact that most of the travelers are U.S. citizens, it can earn foreign exchange credits. Since these airlines are basically state-owned monopolies, with no clear way of calculating their actual operating expenses, they have tended to favor very high "posted" IATA fares. But they cheat outrageously, and every experienced traveler knows that by asking the right questions and haggling with the right people, he can buy a ticket at much less than the "posted" rate, largely because the governments in question do not enforce the IATA fares. The CAB, on the other hand, through a complicated web of agreements, does indeed enforce the IATA fares on U.S. airlines by specifying those fares as its own.

Now as if all this were not enough, Pan Am also has been the victim of an intense new wave of competition from non-scheduled airlines. These "non-skeds," or charters, fly only after they get a plane load of passengers, and therefore they can charge prices that would ruin a regularly scheduled airline. Although non-skeds have been around for many years (including a few non-IATA, regularly scheduled outfits like Icelandic Airlines), they had no significant effect on the major airlines until about the time the jumbo jets arrived, and there is a direct connection. Pan Am sold its second-hand 707s when Boeing began to deliver the 747s, and the principal purchasers of these used but still highly serviceable jets were, of course, the non-skeds, who got them dirt cheap. Naturally the non-skeds promptly repainted the jets and sent them into competition with Pan Am, thus exacerbating all its problems.

Lost Youth and Crisis Examiners

It was against this catastrophic background that Pan Am's Seawell asked for a government subsidy. He actually expected to get it, expressing confidence on a number of occasions by citing the government's "major responsibility to help us." As part of a carefully orchestrated campaign to build public support, Seawell induced Charles Lindbergh to make one of his final public appearances at the annual meeting of Pan Am stockholders in May 1974. Lindbergh, then 72 years old and visibly ill, expressed rambling fears about the future of western civilization in general and Pan Am in particular, his grim, emaciated features mirroring his sincerity. It was a poignant moment for those who remembered Lindbergh as he once was—boyish, tousle-haired, the super-hero of aviation's innocent youth. In a few months he would be dead of cancer.

Instead of the immediate transfusion of government funds that Seawell expected, he got a team of CAB crisis examiners. It is a wrenching experience for an airline executive to submit to this kind of humiliation—having his operations examined and his decisions analyzed, government probers nosing about "asking how often I brush my teeth every day" (as

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one harassed executive put it). Perhaps only welfare mothers and airline executives can really understand this kind of pain.

But even worse, it soon became apparent that Pan Am would get no help from Uncle Sam. Long before congressional sentiment solidified against Pan Am and the Ford Administration formally ruled out either a subsidy or a Lockheed-type guaranteed loan, Seawell and his associates could see the handwriting on the wall.

With a near-depression brewing, the government's reluctance to bail out Pan Am was understandable, but it came as a shock to the airline's managers. They had already begun to dip into cash reserves, which worried the airline's creditors, a 36-bank consortium headed by the First National City Bank of New York. Although Pan Am had assets of some $300 million in its various subsidiaries and physical equipment, dipping into cash reserves to pay current operating expenses would, if allowed to continue, eventually erode the airline's debt/equity ratio beyond what the bankers considered safe. The economic slump destroyed far in advance the faint hope of a summer traffic upturn, long before Seawell and his associates were able to confirm that in July (traditionally the most profitable month for Pan Am), the airline had earned a piddling $1.8 million. Even in the losing year of 1973, Pan Am's July profits had been $21 million. The ultimate crisis seemed at hand by early fall.

Operation Turnaround

Before understanding why Pan Am's pilots entered the scene with their own rescue operation, it is necessary to know something about the airline piloting profession and the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA), the AFL-CIO affiliate that represents them. Over the past three or four decades, U. S. airline pilots have gained the kind of prestige an acquisitive civilization like ours bestows only on big money-makers. The most recent union contract between United Airlines and its pilots, for example, makes it possible for a 747 captain to make $83,000 a year. Pan Am pilots have traditionally been paid even more, largely because ALPA insists that flying over water warrants "hazard pay."

But despite a reputation as no-nonsense collective bargainers, airline pilots have also, historically, been more in tune with management attitudes than most unionized workers. A high percentage of them are college graduates who could fit as easily into the executive suite as the cockpit. Pan Am's management paralysis in the face of the mounting crisis worried the pilots—airline piloting jobs are very scarce, and they cannot readily transfer their cockpit skills to other endeavors—so they launched Operation Turnaround.

It began late in the summer of 1974, when Jim Hotchkiss, a young first officer based at Berlin's Templehoff Airport, began circulating a petition among his fellow Pan Am workers that committed the signers to coming to Washington at their own expense to lobby individual congressmen in support of relief for Pan Am. Like most junior flight crew officers, Hotchkiss was concerned about his job—and for good reason. Seawell had furloughed hundreds of pilots as part of his 1973 retrenchment, and he was talking merger with a number of airlines. Merger is a word that frightens airline pilots because it usually entails a vast reduction in the pilot force. Whatever airline Pan Am might join, as many as one third of its pilots would probably be furloughed, and since airline pilots adhere to strict rules of seniority, this "economy" would fall hardest on those at the bottom of the seniority scale—like Jim Hotchkiss.

Hotchkiss had a lot of nervous company in Berlin, so about 150 pilots descended on Washington for some highly unorthodox lobbying. In addition, the junior pilots brought with them dozens of stewardesses.

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Despite the staccato pace of modern jet travel, the "stew's" image as sex-kitten-cum-healing-mother-angel survives. Uniformly young and attractive, the stewardesses and pilots of Pan Am went hunting in the halls of Congress, looking for men of power who would listen to the Pan Am story as told by Pan Am's employees. "We're not looking for a handout," they insisted. "Just simple justice." Only a few old curmudgeons resisted.

Lobbying Is Not Enough

One of them was William Proxmire, who had been outspokenly opposed to any assistance for Pan Am. Proxmire is a physical fitness buff who runs the five miles from his Washington house to the Capitol every morning, braving muggers and traffic with equal gusto. One misty October morning, however, he was joined by Flight Officer Richard W. Selph, also from the Berlin base. "He looked like a fullback for the Washington Redskins," Proxmire said later. Selph slipped Proxmire a cardboard baton and then both men endured some panting chit-chat for the remainder of the run. Inside the baton was the dust jacket of Proxmire's book *You Can Do It*, on which Selph had written a number of justifications for aid to Pan Am. Proxmire had to change his jogging route to escape the persistent Selph the next morning.

The determination of Selph, Hotchkiss, and the other junior pilots impressed their senior colleagues, who controlled ALPA's Master Executive Council at Pan Am. Mike Watt, a veteran of 33 years whose cockpit experience extends from Sikorsky seaplanes to modern jets, was then head of the Pan Am ALPA group, and he decided the union had to get formally involved in Operation Turnaround. His first step was to assess all Pan Am pilots up to $300 apiece, building a $50,000 fund for use in the operation.

But Watt and the other ALPA leaders realized that mere lobbying would not be enough. The airline's critical problem was cash flow—how to get through the long winter to the summer of 1975, when perhaps tourism would increase. Watt and his colleagues had just finished negotiating a contract that called for a five-percent retroactive pay raise for 1973 and 1974, as well as a nine-percent increase effective January 1, 1975. After a world-wide postcard poll of Pan Am's pilots, Watt got overwhelming approval to renegotiate the contract downward in order to ease the airline's cash flow squeeze.

Upon examination, the Pan Am pilots' decision to renegotiate their salaries downward is not so surprising. Without Pan Am, they would be unemployed, standing in line for weekly checks like any recession-struck Detroit auto worker. And since the latest contract easily put senior captains over the $80,000-a-year mark, they could afford to act like good company men.

But Watt and his fellow senior pilots were far too tough and knowledgeable to take an 11-percent cut in pay voluntarily without getting something in return. What they got was a guarantee against either mergers or any additional pilot furloughs—if either occurs, their pay goes back up. In addition, the pilots required Pan Am's withdrawal from the Mutual Aid Pact, an employers' strike fund to which airlines contribute in order to reimburse any shutdown by a strike. It made sense for Pan Am to get out, since it had paid more than $50 million into the fund over the years while receiving back only $5 million. But it was a victory for ALPA in any case. The pilots' daring maneuver seems to have spurred both management and government on to renewed effort. For its part, management pursued the Shah's oil money with considerable flair until the negotiations collapsed in mid-1975. Meanwhile Pan Am's position improved slightly; the bankers had to either keep extending credit or force the line into bankruptcy. Pan Am had learned the truth of the old

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adage that when you get far enough into a bank, you have a partner.

Meanwhile the government bestirred itself to aid Pan Am in a number of ways short of outright subsidy. It raised its postal payments to the standard specified by the Universal Postal Union (Pan Am had been carrying mail for less). The Senate Commerce Committee warned foreign governments that they would face retaliation unless landing fees were equalized. (Quantas, the Australian national airline, pays only $178 to land at Los Angeles International, but the Aussies charge Pan Am $4200 for each landing at Sydney.)

This combination of government, management, and labor initiatives seems to have had a favorable impact on Pan Am's creditors. The bankers' consortium, which was apparently moving toward a catastrophic dissolution in early 1975, with several nervous members trying to get out, recovered its confidence. The consortium has recently stabilized itself, and feels confident enough about Pan Am's future to permit the airline's tangible worth to fluctuate below $200 million—nearly $100 million less than it previously considered safe.

The Old Hauteur

So despite the general gloom that has permeated knowledgeable speculation about Pan Am's future for so long, the airline has continued to muddle along, limping through each winter traffic valley, earning just enough during the short summer tourist season to stave off bankruptcy. When everybody has just about given up on you but you keep coming back to answer the bell again and again, it has to have a positive effect.

Significantly, Pan Am's managers seem to be looking less to the government for handouts, and more to their own resources. It has been a bitter and frustrating time for them. But merely surviving seems to have brought back much of the old pride, self-confidence, even hauteur, that were once the hallmark of those wearing Pan Am's corporate livery.

The lesson Pan Am seems to have learned from its hard times is that you can't always depend on the government for protection. The airline got off the ground through government favors, and the general climate of federal largesse in which it grew led it to assume, overconfidently and incorrectly, that it could go on forever keeping its profits and letting the government foot its losses. Although it is still dependent on regulatory favors from the CAB, its executives aren't counting on direct cash subsidies any more.

But they should be able to count on, if not government help, the absence of government harm. Recently, the CAB opened the North Atlantic to two new airlines, Northwest and Delta, and permitted international service to expand to 11 new cities. This CAB decision, if it finally goes through, is bound to injure Pan Am (which does not serve the new cities), as well as traditional gateway cities like New York, which desperately need the revenues generated by tourists staying over en route to Europe. In his minority dissent to the order expanding North Atlantic service, CAB Chairman John E. Robson declared that it would exacerbate the financial shakiness of both Pan Am and TWA.

If it turns out that Pan Am can't survive without government help, we should remember the lesson we have been taught by its flight crews: that the corporation consists of people. Liberals, like Baker and Proxmire, have been right in pointing out the blindness of conservatives who would aid Lockheed and scorn the welfare case. But the liberals have been wrong in automatically aiding the welfare case and automatically denying help to the corporation. Either may be undeserving. Both should be required to do their best to help themselves. But, finally, we should think a long time before we decline the last chance to throw out a life preserver to either. ■

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political book notes

Public Affairs books to be published in September

The ACLU on Trial. William H. McIlhany. Arlington House, $8.95. As an institution, the American Civil Liberties Union is ripe for discussion these days, because, as McIlhany points out, it has moved in its 50-odd year lifespan away from a "pure" conception of civil liberties to greater and greater approval of government control over individuals—a policy which surely results in a diminution of civil liberties. As a libertarian, McIlhany believes that he is a truer advocate of liberties than the ACLU. And he may be right, because the ACLU now tends to believe that pure libertarianism permits the "oppression" of one group of citizens by another, and thus the union now favors civil equality more than civil liberty.

McIlhany does little more than expound this paradox, however, because he is also wedded to the orthodoxies of the John Birch Society, which is to say he believes fervently in conspiracies, specifically Communist. This is a pity, because it surely prevents him from seeing the right answer to interesting questions. For instance (in discussing the ACLU's approval of extended government control of the airwaves):

"If the ACLU is supported by the wealthy, elite Left of the Council on Foreign Relations and related foundations, why would it favor turning over the captive electronics forums of these establishmentarians to arbitrary bureaucratic control?" Answer, because this elite "interlocks" with the agencies in Washington, and so controls both. A typically conspiratorial answer, and an unsatisfactory one. Another possibility, specifically ruled out in McIlhany's analysis of the meaning of conspiracy, is that the "elite" that supports the ACLU is in fact quite willing to support policies that will ultimately undermine its own elitism.

America as an Ordinary Country: U. S. Foreign Policy and the Future. Richard Rosecrance, ed. Cornell, $9.75.

America's Working Women: A Documentary History, 1600 to the Present. Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, Susan Reverby, eds. Vintage, $6.95.

The American Judicial Tradition. G. Edward White. Oxford, $18.50. White, a law professor who also has training as a historian, tries to do for judges what Richard Hofstadter did for politicians in *The American Political Tradition*—through a series of profiles, trace the broad outlines of 200 years of intellectual history. This book doesn't have the spark and absolute command of Hofstadter's, but it is meticulously researched and well thought out, if a little too reverential of the majesty of the law. White's central theory is that judges moved from being "law-givers" in the 19th century to "law-makers" in the 20th. The chapter on the Burger court is excellent.

American Political Institutions in the 1970s. Demetrios Caraley, ed. Columbia, $17.50/6.95. A collection of recent articles from *Political Science Quarterly*, most of them by big-name professors and dealing with fairly current matters, like Watergate and the latest versions of congressional reform. It's written mostly in a style redolent of quarterly journalism.

Among Those Present. Nancy Dickerson. Random House, $8.95.

Barred From School: Three Million Children. Thomas J. Cottle. New Republic Books, $7.95.

Between Animal and Man: The Key to the Kingdom. Dr. Michael Fox. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $8.95.

Beyond the Presidency: The Residues of Power. Marie B. Hecht. Macmillan, $15.95.

The Critics. Lehman Engel. Macmillan, $10.95.

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The Culture Barons. Faye Levine. Crowell, $10.

Dean Acheson: The State Department Years. David S. McClellan. Dodd, Mead, $15. A detailed retelling and reevaluation of the 1954-55 period in American foreign policy, very kind to and reverential of Acheson. The aim, well carried out, is to exculpate him from various Cold War sins.

Emergency Employment: A Study in Federalism. Howard W. Hallman. Alabama Univ., $9.75.

The Enlightenment in America. Henry F. May. Oxford, $15.

Ethics and Profits: The Crisis of Confidence in American Business. Leonard Silk, David Vogel. Simon & Schuster, $7.95.

Henry Kissinger: The Anguish of Power. John Stoessinger. Norton, $8.95.

Hide in Plain Sight. Leslie Waller. Delacorte, $8.95.

Kissinger: The European Mind in American Policy. Bruce Mazlish. Basic, $12.50.

The Life and Death of the SLA. Les Payne, et al. Ballantine, $1.95.

The Manipulators: America in the Media Age. Robert Sobel. Anchor/Doubleday, $9.95.

Media Sexploitation. Wilson Bryan Key. Prentice-Hall, $8.95.

Milestones! 200 Years of American Law. Jethro K. Lieberman. Oxford, $19.95.

Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life. Moshe Dayan. Morrow, $15. Dayan's dryly written autobiography, with its wadi-by-wadi accounts of skirmishes and manuevers, marks him down as more tactician than statesman. Fact-filled, if unreflective.

My America, Your America. Lawrence Welk, Bernice McGeehan. Prentice-Hall, $7.95.

Nobody Speaks for Me! Self-Portraits of American Working-Class Women. Nancy Seifer. Simon & Schuster, $9.95.

No Guts, No Glory—How to Fight Dirty Against Management. Joseph R. Mancuso. Ashley, $8.95.

On Revolt. J. Bowyer Bell. Harvard, $15. Bell has done much research and reporting ("I walked the murder mile in Aden... talked at length with the arms smuggler out of the Congo, the old missionary from the Zambezi Valley"), but in the end he suc-

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cumbs to the widespread temptation to immerse his findings in the murky waters of generalization: "What makes a rebel can be quite complicated, or so academic analysis has indicated: relative deprivation or aggression as a result of frustration or societal mimicry of neighboring patterns."

Pete: The Story of Peter V. Cacchione, New York's First Communist Councilman. Simon W. Gerson. International.

Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy. Andrew J. Meltsner. California, $10.

The Politics of Exclusion. Michael N. Danielson. Columbia, $17.50/6.95. The kind of gut impression you'd get by driving through any big-city suburb is accurate: the suburbs are richer, whiter, more spacious and faster growing than the inner cities, and the people who live in them are doing well at keeping racial, economic, or commercial diversity inside the city limits. Professor Danielson explores at some length why and how this happens, and generally mourns the loss of an "open society" in America. Interesting statistics are scattered throughout; for example, only 18 per cent of Americans would prefer to live in cities. A thorough book on an important subject.

The President Speaks... Off the Record. Harold Brayman. Dow Jones, $15.

The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory. Richard J. Bernstein. Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, $17.95.

Nancy Reagan: A Special Kind of Love. Roger Elwood. Pocket Books, $1.50. A hasty, flyweight campaign biography for a campaign that never materialized. Ms. Reagan here is noble, virtuous, loyal—in short, perfect. Even her flaws become hidden assets in Elwood's loving and clumsy hands. What philosophy there is here is sanctimonious stuff about women devoting their every thought and action to their husbands.

Taming the Giant Corporation. Ralph Nader, Mark Green, Joel Seligman. Norton, $10.50. An excerpt from this book appeared in the July/August issue of *The Washington Monthly*.

The Transformation of Southern Politics: Social Change and Political Consequence Since 1945. Jack Bass, Walter DeVries. Basic, $15.95. A journalist and an academic collaborated on this well put together if uninspired post-civil rights rewrite of V. O. Key's *Southern Politics*. If you're at all familiar with the field you won't find much

The feudal revolutionary.

Mohammed Riza Pahlevi is a man of many contradictions: an absolute monarch and a social reformer, a mystic and a pragmatist, and OPEC leader who has used the "oil weapon" to *reduce* tensions between Israel and Egypt. By a noted correspondent who has known Iran for 15 years and enjoyed remarkably candid interviews with the Shah, this is a graceful, perceptive account of the leader who has built his once-destitute nation into an influential power in world affairs. "If the book reads like a blend of adventure story and thriller, it would seem inevitable given the elements of the rise of this 'Imperial Shah.'"—*Publishers Weekly*

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new, but for the novice it's a useful overview. The recurring themes are the dual ascendance of blacks and Republicans on the Southern political scene, both hailed as wonderfully hopeful signs—the first rightly, of course, but the second perhaps not. There is generally no mourning in these pages for what John Egerton calls the Americanization of Dixie; the book is a heralding, not an elegy.

20th Century Journey: A Memoir of a Life and the Times, Volume I. William L. Shirer. Simon & Schuster, $12.50.

The Vanishing White Man. Stan Steiner. Harper and Row, $12.95.

Washington Is Leaking. Art Buchwald. Putnam, $8.95.

The Watches of the Night. Harry M. Caudill. Atlantic Monthly, $8.95.

We Came to Help. Monika Schwinn, Bernhard Diehl. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, $8.95.

What Really Happened to the Class of '65? Michael Medved, David Wallechinsky. Random House, $10.

What Schools Can Do. Joseph Featherstone. Liveright, $8.95.

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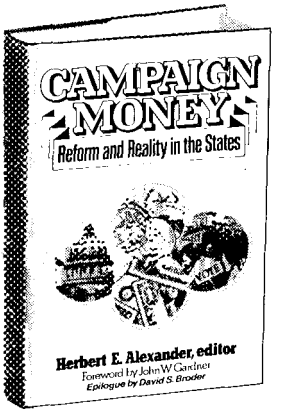

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